

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2018

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

Members Present:

Councillor Abdal Ullah (Chair)	
Councillor Marc Francis (Vice-Chair)	– Lead for Resources
Councillor Sufia Alam	– Lead for Children's Services
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	– Lead for Health, Adults and Community
Councillor Dipa Das	– Lead for Place
Councillor James King	
Councillor Kyrsten Perry	
Councillor Bex White	– Lead for Governance
Councillor Andrew Wood	

Co-opted Members Present:

Joanna Hannan	– Representative of Diocese of Westminster
Dr Phillip Rice	– Church of England Representative
Khoyrul Shaheed	– Muslim Faith Community
Fatiha Kassouri	– Parent Governors
Neil Cunningham	– Parent Governors

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Danny Hassell	– Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	– Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth)

Apologies:

Councillor Mohammed Pappu	
Ahmed Hussain	– Parent Governors

Officers Present:

Elizabeth Bailey	– Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Mark Campbell	– Chair of the TH Education Business Partnership

Vicky Clark	– (Divisional Director for Growth and Economic Development)
Sharon Godman	– (Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Partnerships)
Afazul Hoque	– (Head Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Sandjea-Marie Green	– Head of Youth Service
Ian Parkes	– Chair of ELBA
Sunita Sharma	– Consultant

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

2. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29th October, 2018 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

3. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

3.1 Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership (THEBP)

The Committee received a presentation on the initiatives of the Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership and what individual partners are doing to support employment aspirations in the Borough and to discuss what has worked well and areas that could be improved. The discussions on this presentation may be summarised as follows:

The Committee noted that:

- The connectivity that has been developed by the Partnership is exceptional
- All apart from some of the newer free schools, the majority of local schools receive services from the Partnership
- The Partnership works to identify the best way that it can help residents develop their employability
- There has been a positive shift in the attitude of white working class families regarding aspirations for their children and attitudes towards education
- The business community within the City of London has provided incredible support over the years to the Partnership
- Although increasing numbers of local residents have entered and successfully completed degree courses. Anecdotal evidence and some

limited data does seem to suggest that new graduates can struggle to find work commensurate with their qualifications. There are opportunities available, and residents are successfully obtaining qualifications, yet the Borough's graduates, particularly young graduates, seem to be encountering obstacles to finding suitable work. Therefore, the Committee wanted to understand the higher education journey of Young London residents aged 18-24 years, from their pre-HE institutions, through their higher education study on full or part-time undergraduate degrees, and on to their graduate employment destinations.

- The Committee also wished to see what the Partnership had been able to do to assist the graduates in their employment destinations. They noted that the Partnership have worked hard to develop effective solutions as all children, regardless of their social background, where they live or the jobs their parents do, should have the same chance to meet people doing a wide range of jobs to help them understand the vast opportunities open to them.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Mark Campbell for his presentation and the Committee expressed the view the Council should review its funding of the Partnership to ensure it is proportionate with what is needed to support its work.

3.2 Apprenticeships: East London Business Alliance (ELBA)

The Committee received a presentation from the East London Business Alliance (ELBA) on the uptake around apprenticeships; employment outcomes; future plans and what has worked well or areas that could be improved. The discussions on the presentation are outlined below:

The Committee noted that:

- ELBA works in close harmony in with the Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership (THEBP) and supports social mobility with a focus upon class; race and worklessness;
- Whilst worklessness has fallen earnings have not risen for a high percentage of residents in the Borough not earning the London minimum wage resulting in 'in work poverty'.
- With many residents in low paid work means that whilst there is record numbers of people in employment, too many jobs are low skilled and low paid. Many workers therefore become trapped in low pay with little chance of social mobility;
- Although many Tower Hamlets graduates find employment and many go on to successful careers, ethnic minority graduates are much less likely to be employed than their white peers after graduation and there are also marked disparities in wages between many ethnic minority women and men who do manage to find jobs after graduation and their white counterparts;

- English language skills can act as a barrier to employment, or to being accepted onto apprenticeship programmes. Therefore ELBA looks at the competencies required to overcome such barriers;
- Employers' in Tower Hamlets have expressed the view said that the Government have failed to act on mounting concerns about changes to the apprenticeship system. With local business owners still struggling to comprehend how the system is supposed to work;
- Whilst there has been a 26% fall in take up, the new levy was introduced to maximise the opportunities for apprenticeship for both the learner and employer;
- The new levy should (i) provide an opportunity to recruit from a wider talent pool and build a more diverse workforce and (ii) appeal to young people who excel academically whilst also opens the door to those who thrive in a practical environment;
- The degree versus apprenticeship debate is long-running and families choosing the children's next educational move proper consideration. Higher education also continues to be a popular option despite the rise in tuition fees, with an all-time high of 241,585 18-year-olds across the UK accepted onto degree courses in 2017. Although attitudes to apprenticeships have also evolved and they are now recognised as an equal alternative to university without the associated loans that have to be taken out to pay for educational expenses. As the rapidly rising college tuition costs have made student debt the only option to pay for college for many students, which also put those students from lower income households at a distinct disadvantage;
- In light of Brexit there will be tougher competition for well-qualified talent, development of existing staff, and the increasing difficulty in recruiting senior and skilled employees. Organisations must therefore remain alert to the potential changes and be agile in their responses to be able to continue attracting and retaining people with the appropriate skillsets and potential for their needs especially for the lower paid jobs; and
- Work is being done to address the development of (i) the "Soft Skills" needed by job seekers; and (ii) the "Hard Skills" needed Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) jobs.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Ian Parkes for his presentation and the work of the East London Business Alliance in addressing the needs of London's communities and how they help their corporate partners innovate, collaborate and think differently about how they give back.

3.3 Improving Youth Employment: Setting the Scene

The Committee received a presentation on the Council's work around supporting educational aspirations, including:

- Growth strategy;
- Work with schools, local businesses and other partners;
- Young work path development;

- Development of post 16 offer;
- Pilot activity; and
- Apprenticeships in house.

As a result of the discussions on this presentation the Committee noted that:

- Work is being undertaken to develop a pilot careers education project, focusing on Years 7-9 of secondary school; the intention is to get children more excited about the job opportunities available to them and more motivated to study hard
- The Apprenticeship Generation manager will also work with businesses and organisations within the Borough to increase the number and range of apprenticeships on offer and thus help students secure a viable professional career path; Loss of employment space is of concern and any planning applications are to be considered with regard to any schemes impact upon employment space e.g. business units mixed with residential as opposed to retail;
- A dialogue has been established with the Living Wage Foundation who are the organisation at the heart of the independent movement of businesses and people who are campaigning for the idea that a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. They celebrate and recognise the leadership of responsible employers who choose to go further and pay a real Living Wage based on the cost of living and so far 99 local businesses have taken up the offer of accreditation and have agreed a timetable of implementation;
- Those businesses who are commercial tenants of either the Council or Registered Providers will receive support to take up the offer of accreditation and to agree a timetable of implementation; and
- Consideration should be given to the impact of insourcing council services providing tangible employment opportunities for residents.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman and Vicky Clark for their presentation and the work of the Council in addressing the needs of Tower Hamlets communities and how the Council is currently working with partner's agencies to improve youth employment.

4. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Youth Service Challenge Session

The Committee received a report on the implementation of recommendations of scrutiny challenge session that covered:

- Update on youth service priorities;
- Update on recommendations from the Scrutiny Challenge Session;
- Update on Performance; and
- Future plans and ambitions for youth services and youth voice.

The discussions arising from the presentation maybe summarised as follows:

The Committee noted that:

- The Council is working on an action focused approach to the implementation of recommendations;
- In the east of the Borough it has been identified that there are benefits in the outsourcing certain elements of youth provision as these providers are able to access funding streams not available to the Council;
- As of 28th August 2018 the Youth Service had all 8 of its Youth Hubs opened;
- Youth Service has successfully recruited new frontline staff; increasing frontline staffing by 23% from when the service was restructured in October 2017, and increasing the ratio of female staff by 12% (previously 28% of staff were female now 40% of staff are female);
- All sickness monitoring is under control;
- All Youth Hubs (internally delivered and Commissioned) and Specialist Provision have increased outputs;
- Contracted provision had 2001 contacts in July; this had increased to 2986 in September, whilst in-house provision had 1251 contacts in July; this had increased to 1837 in September;
- Strengthening young people's participation and engagement in decision making is a vital aspect of developing the youth provision; including the elections for Young Mayor;
- It was important to speak the young people's digital language;
- Youth provision needed to be delivered in the most effective fashion including the use of buildings and detached staff so as to meet the particular needs of young people in the Boroughs various wards and communities. The development of such provision needs to take into consideration best practice from other borough's;
- Consideration was being given on how to develop work with those young people at risk and their families;
- The Service is looking at how to develop and exploit the full range of services available from in-house and external providers e.g. Effective sign posting for young people and providing meaningful interventions;
- There would an update next year on the development of the Borough's in-house and external provision of the Service.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Councillor Danny Hassell and Sandjea-Marie Green for their presentation and the work of the Council in the development of the provision of youth provision and looked forward to receiving future updates.

5. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

The Committee was advised that a whilst a Petition had been received by Monitoring Officer she had after very careful consideration decided that it was not inappropriate for it to be considered by Scrutiny.

**6. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG
2018/19**

Noted

7. CABINET FORWARD PLAN & WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

Noted

8. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

9. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

1. **Councillor Bex White Scrutiny Lead for Governance** advised the Councillor Bex White Scrutiny Lead for Governance advised the Committee that (i) A Communications Challenge Session had been held that had looked at a number of issues including (i) internal communications and (ii) increased resident engagement. In addition, it was noted that on the 27th November, 2018 at Harford Community Centre there would be an evidence gathering session of the Brexit Commission to consider evidence in relation to (i) Migration; (iii) Charities; and (iii) Social Cohesion.
2. **Councillor Kahar Chowdhury Scrutiny Lead for Health, Adults & Community** advised the Committee that (i) In July there had been a meeting with the Health and Social Care Partners; (ii) In September the Sub-Committee had, had a presentation by Menara Ahmed the Council's VAWG Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime Manager. Topics covered had included (a) the identification and management of residents at risk of domestic violence, (b) reporting levels, (c) the impact of universal credit on domestic violence; and (d) the provision of services for those residents with no recourse to public funds. The Sub-Committee had also received a verbal summary of the Healthwatch Annual Report 2017/18, which had been presented by Dianne Barham – Chief Executive of Healthwatch Tower Hamlets. Finally, going forward the Sub-Committee it was noted would be considering a number of themes including (i) Adult Social Care and (ii) Alcohol and Substance misuse
3. **Councillor Marc Francis Scrutiny Lead for Resources** advised the Committee that at the meeting of the Cabinet on the 31st October, 2018 he had on behalf of the Chair provided an update on the Scrutiny Challenge Session in relation to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

4. **Councillor Sufia Alam Scrutiny Lead for Lead for Children's Services** advised the Committee that (i) on 12th November, 2018 the latest Safeguarding Training Session had been held; (ii) on 19th November, 2018 the Young Peoples Summit had taken place which had been a positive event; (iii) on 23rd November, 2018 meeting with Judith St John the Council's Divisional Director Sports Leisure and Culture on the preparation for a Workshop to consider the Borough's Leisure provision and (iv) on 30th November, 2018 was the date of the Mayors Young Peoples Summit.
5. **Councillor Abdal Ullah, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee** advised that on 31st October, 2018 he had attended the meeting of the Cabinet to provide an update on the work of the Committee. He reported on a number of issues including (i) the most recent Scrutiny meeting that had focussed on educational aspirations and included presentations from head teachers, officers and the Cabinet Lead Member. He had told the Mayor that this session had been very valuable and a report would be following on at a later date (ii) that the Committee had started to consider how they would be responding to the Council's budget proposals and had received the quarterly budget monitoring report; and (iii) the Committees work on fire safety had been presented to Cabinet on the 31st October with an overview report and action plan.

10. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

The Committee received and noted those questions to be presented at Cabinet by the Chair in relation to unrestricted business on the agenda – **See Appendix 1**

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

Nil items

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

As 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.

13. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items

14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

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 9.45 p.m.

**Chair, Councillor Abdal Ullah
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

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Agenda Item – 6.1 Planning for School Places – 2018/19 Review and Recommendations	
Questions	Response
<p>Q1. London Dock - has any AQ testing being done at this location, what where the results?</p>	<p>An AQ test has been undertaken. The site of the proposed secondary school is adjacent to The Highway, and the results showed that there were significant levels of pollution during the periods of vehicle congestion. The school design has therefore included measures to improve the internal and external environment for the users of the building. This includes mechanical ventilation so that filtered fresh air is circulated within the building and the tallest block of the building has been located adjacent to The Highway to restrict the movement of particulates and traffic noise into the play and external spaces to the south of the site. Careful consideration has been given to the provision and location of plant species to improve air quality across the site.</p> <p>The school design has also taken account of the emissions levels created by the building to mitigate the effects on neighbours and the wider community.</p>
<p>Q2. Why are Located looking for three separate school sites (one I assume for CW College Secondary) if it is unlikely that central government will approve new schools?</p> <p>4.9 As stated previously, it is unlikely that central government will approve any new applications for schools to be established in Tower Hamlets.</p>	<p>It is not clear why 'Located' are looking for three separate sites for new schools in the Tower Hamlets area. The Mulberry Schools Trust is the only academy chain that currently has government approval to open new schools in Tower Hamlets. Please see a link to the DfE website confirming the current list (Nov 2018) of successful proposers:</p>

	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-successful-applications</p> <p>This means that the Trust's application has already progressed to the next phase, which now enables it to seek to secure a suitable site for a new school in the Tower Hamlets area.</p> <p>This DfE's current free application criteria is very clear in stating that it will now target 'areas with the lowest educational performance, to put free schools in the places most in need of good new schools.'</p> <p>This means that the DfE will only consider new applications to open free schools in areas that have both low educational standards and a basic need for additional school places. This is not the position in Tower Hamlets.</p>
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<p>Q3. What is the difference between the £10.5m and £53.85m?</p> <p>The Pupil Place Planning Report ‘7.3 The £10.5m capital funding identified from the Department for Education’</p> <p>The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Supporting Evidence and Funding Gap Report says:</p> <p>‘6.7 The table below provides a breakdown of the funding sources that fall under this category:</p> <p>Table 5.\\ capital grant funding sources Funding Source Amount £53.85m Notes Schools Basic Need/ Expansion Grant)</p>	<p>The £53.85m included in the CIL report was based on the position in 2017/18 and included existing commitments on the Schools Basic Need/Expansion grant funds. It also included an estimate on what future Basic Need/Expansion grant funding might be available in 2020/21 which has not yet been announced by the DfE. The £10.5m included in the Pupil Place Planning Report is the balance of the grant that is still available, allowing for the previous commitments..</p>
<p>Q4. Is there a reason why LBTH has chosen 2 form rather than 3 form of entry as the standard size? Or is this only driven by size of sites available?</p> <p>Appendix 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New primary school sites are intended to deliver a 2 form of entry. The GLA OAPF for the Isle of Dogs & S Poplar indicates a preference for 3 forms of entry 	<p>At the time when site allocations were identified for the emerging Local Plan in 2016, the council’s preferred approach was to deliver 2FE primary schools. This was influenced by the availability of land in Tower Hamlets as well as information on parental preference for smaller primary schools. A number of the borough’s existing 3FE schools have struggled to fill to capacity. The site allocations identified in the emerging Local Plan have therefore been viability tested on the basis of a 2FE primary school.</p> <p>However, changes in the National Funding Formula mean that larger schools will be more financially sustainable in the long term. The Plan itself does not specify that primary schools must be 2FE, and</p>

	where plans have not already been developed it may be possible to negotiate a larger primary school with the site developers. For example, the developer for the Crossharbour site is proposing a 3FE primary school.
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Agenda Item – 6.3 Tower Hamlets Customer Service Transformation Plan	
Questions	Response
<p>1) Staff training is key to customer service. The action for this is “ongoing”. What training plans are underway currently to ensure service standards during this change process?</p>	<p>Staff have been engaged through out the period of redesign – workshops and meetings with the Divisional Director over the last year.</p> <p>Staff and customer testing groups are being organised to start in January. This was a direct response from staff wanting to ensure they were involved in the design and development of products and systems that they will be using and delivering with the customer.</p> <p>Staff training workshops are already in the diary for January and a skills audit will be carried out to ensure we customer agents have the skills as well as the equipment to deliver the new customer model.</p> <p>This will inform and develop the training programme for staff to ensure we have made the investment in them where it is needed.</p>
Agenda Item – 6.3a Appendix 1- Tower Hamlets Customer Service Transformation Plan	
Questions	Response
<p>Q. No mention of the word App, no mention of the word Social Media in the report. Will the 'digital by default' look at these options?</p>	<p>We know from market research and other customer services both from the private and public sector that Apps are not necessarily how customer want to transact with their services. Particularly young people and communities which are</p>

	vulnerable. Apps take up data and space on phones and often do not get utilised. Instead we are investing in the digital platform which acts and enables transactions like an app but through the website. This is quick and doesn't use data and the intention is for the digital platform to look and act like a platform that can be easily accessed from phone and tablets.
Q. Will we look at AI, Chatbots and virtual assistants in the CS Plan?	AI is key to future transformation. We want to apply a chatbot to the Clean and Green services as a test pilot and this will enable us to understand our own vulnerabilities and help to identify where further investment is needed to roll this out across other council service areas.
Q. Will we keep the FiFiLi app or develop it further?	The FiffiLi App is being relaunched as Love Your Neighbourhood and investment in this has already been made.

Agenda Item – 6.4a London City Airport: Neighbouring Authority Agreement (Noise Insulation Payments Scheme) Appendix A Map of Eligible Area	
Questions	Response
Q. Has the accuracy of the noise boundaries ever been tested using real world monitoring - at ground level and also at different heights (given tall buildings within or close to zone)?	The Section 106 Agreement stipulates that those properties within the 57 dB contour will be eligible for compensation. It also requires that the 57 dB contour is independently reassessed by an acoustic specialist every year (between 16 June and 15 September) and amended if appropriate, to ensure its accuracy. The Infrastructure Planning Team will work with the appointed acoustic specialist in 2019 to ensure noise levels at different heights (particularly tall buildings) are taken into account.

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