

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 2019

**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 Mohammed Pappu	
Councillor Bex White	– Lead for Governance
Councillor Andrew Wood	

Co-opted Members Present:

Joanna Hannan	– Representative of Diocese of Westminster
Fatiha Kassouri	– Parent Governors
Dr Phillip Rice	– Church of England Representative

Other Councillors Present:

None

Apologies:

Neil Cunningham	– Parent Governors
Ahmed Hussain	– Parent Governors
Khoyrul Shaheed	– Muslim Faith Community

Others Present:

Jaami Barry	– (Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets)
Vivian Akinremi	– (Deputy Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Youth Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing)
Ahmed Duale	– (Deputy Young Mayor of Tower

Nadia Hussein	– Hamlets and Youth Cabinet Member for Environment (Deputy Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Youth Cabinet Member for Community)
Daawood Islam	– (Deputy Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Youth Cabinet Member for Social and Economic Growth)
Muhsin Mahmud	– (Deputy Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Youth Cabinet Member for Communications)

Officers Present:

Afazul Hoque	– (Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Daniel Kerr	– (Strategy and Policy Manager)
Sandjea-Marie Green	– (Head of Youth Service)
David Knight	– (Senior Democratic Services Officer)
Zoe Folley	– (Committee Officer, Governance)

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

2. ATTACKS IN SRI LANKA

The Chair made reference to the attacks that had taken place on Sunday 21 April at a number of locations in Sri Lanka including hotels and churches holding Easter mass. The Chair indicated that following this horrific attack the Committees thoughts and sympathies were with all the victims and their friends and families.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

3.1 Minutes - 25th March, 2019

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25th March 2019 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings. Copy to sign.

4. DISCUSSION ITEM

4.1 Young Mayor and Deputy Young Mayors

The Chair welcomed the recently elected Young Mayor and a number of Deputy Young Mayors to the meeting

They firstly outlined their manifesto aims with regard to improving the health and wellbeing of young people and bringing together young people and the community to tackle the most pressing issues facing them in the Borough.

Priorities included: taking action to help address knife crime, improving community integration, strengthening engagement between the young people and the Council, promoting healthy lifestyles, raising awareness of mental health issues and support and raising aspirations and awareness of the career opportunities available to local people within Canary Wharf and City Fringe. There would also be a focus on improving the natural and social environment.

The Chair invited the Committee to ask questions of the young representatives, and the following points were noted:

- The Committee recently carried out a Challenge Session of LBTH communications. The Committee would welcome the representative's feedback on the report, particularly the plans regarding engagement with young people. The report would be sent to the young people.
- Members noted the need to reach out to and engage with a wider range of young people. The young people considered that the Council should make greater use of social media platforms, particularly to reach out to 'hard to reach groups'. The Council could also work with schools to bring visitors to school assemblies.
- It was also suggested that emphasis should be placed on holding more workshops in schools and youth centres, with The Police in particular. This should help to change attitudes towards crime.
- The Youth Parliament had made tackling knife a national priority, with the aim of promoting collaborative working across London to develop a prevention and rehabilitation strategy.
- When looking at the possible causes of crime, it was important to look at a broad range of factors, rather than focus on issues such as 'grime music'.
- Regarding education matters, it was noted that the Deputy Mayor's Portfolio for the Community covered a wide range of issues including education support.
- There would be a scrutiny session on 30th April 2019, looking at the issue of school exclusions. The Young representatives were welcomed to attend this meeting and share their views.
- The young representatives expressed comments about the need for the schools, (especially independent schools) and the Council to work more closely together, on issues particularly effecting young people, such as apprenticeship and employment opportunities.
- Support was expressed for greater engagement with young people on the environmental issues, given the increasing importance of this issue. Councillor Perry referred to her role as Cycle Champion and expressed a wish to work with the young representatives on this issue.

In summary, the Chair the praised the work of the Young Mayor and his Team especially the opportunities that it provided to young people.

He also thanked the Young Mayor and Deputies Mayors for attending the meeting and encouraged them and elected Members to engage on future events and initiatives.

The Chair Moved and it was:

RESOLVED:

That the presentation from the Young Mayor and Deputies be noted:

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Scrutiny Structure

Afazul Hoque, (Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy) gave a presentation on proposed changes to the scrutiny function, following feedback from the scrutiny away day held on 16 March 2019. This presentation had been circulated as a supplementary agenda.

He outlined the main conclusions from the away day, focusing on the perceived issues with the present system around: overloaded agendas, limited engagement with non - executive Councillors, the need to consider a wider range of issues, the frequency of scrutiny sub – committee meetings and the size and broad remit of the scrutiny lead’s portfolios, amongst other issues. Consequently to address the issues, it was suggested that: the Scrutiny Lead Portfolios be revised to facilitate a greater oversight of their portfolio. It was also proposed that the existing sub – committees would be replaced by three new sub – committee, each meeting 6 times a year, (instead of 5). There would also be in-depth finance and resources reviews and education and children’s services reviews (led by the relevant Scrutiny Lead) with a focus on post Ofsted issues.

Benefits of the new system should include: improved flexibility to deal with topical issues and more in – in depth and outcome based reviews.

In terms of setting the work programme, there would be two work programming sessions (Members and stakeholders). There would also be a Communication and Development Programme. Subject to the Committee’s approval of the proposals, the proposals would be submitted to the new Committee to agree.

The Committee asked a number of questions about the proposals and the points raised are summarised below:

- The Committee discussed and generally agreed that there should be five scrutiny leads and they should be about equal in size in terms of

the work covered. Support was also expressed for the creation of three subcommittees, meeting at a greater frequency with Scrutiny Lead reviews, reporting back to the OSC. This would allow for more in-depth reviews and more effective scrutiny.

- It was suggested that consideration could be given to shorting the length of OSC meetings and reallocating the time to the sub – committees, as a way of distributing the work load and enabling more focused reviews.
- Members were mindful of the issues around Officer's time and resource constraints. It was noted that this issue would need to be taken into account in taking any future arrangements forward.
- The Committee noted the need for the work programming session to be carefully planned and managed given the potential number of participants. It was emphasised that this exercise should be outcome focused.
- Members also noted the need to reserve space in the work plan for unplanned items that arise during the year, such as call – ins and agreed that the new system needed to be flexible enough to accommodate such issues.
- Support was also expressed for raising the profile and facilitating greater public engagement at scrutiny meetings at the OSC and also at the sub - committees through receiving petitions or resident's survey feedback.
- The Committee received a brief update on the development of short social media films on scrutiny activities. They were also reminded of plans to facilitate more long term forward planning through the development of a 12 month Executive Forward Plan.
- Members also raised the issues of Committee Member attendance, particularly at scrutiny sub – committee meetings.
- It was also suggested there was a greater need to focus on the scrutiny process in particular how meetings are run as this was important to help effectiveness of scrutiny.
- The Committee agreed to support the changes as proposed and noted that they would be kept under review.

As a result of discussions on the report the Chair moved and it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. That the proposed changes to the scrutiny structure as set out in the presentation be agreed and presented to the new Committee in the new municipal year for approval.

5.2 Safety, Aspiration and Inclusion Priorities

The Committee received the report setting out the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Review on improving the following three key priority areas for residents:

1. Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Drug Related Crime;

2. Education Aspirations; and
3. Employment Aspirations.

The Committee discussed and commented on each of the main sections of the report. The discussion can be summarised as follows:

- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and Drug Related Crime

Recommendation 1: The Council works with partners, such as the Police and housing providers, to: Develop one central place for residents to report anti-social behaviour incidents.

The Chair reported that he had engaged with Registered Social Landlords about the need to find one central place in Tower Hamlets to report ASB. He strongly supported this recommendation and wanted the Council to take this forward.

A Member also requested that the Committee should receive statistics, showing the impact of the introduction of this measure.

Recommendation 4: That the Council and the Metropolitan Police Service work with the Safer Neighbourhood Board and ward panels to carry out a number of activities etc.

The Committee wished to ensure that young people were directly involved in this and the decision making initiatives.

- Education Aspirations

Recommendation 5: The Council partners with schools to collectively campaign to reduce pupils changing schools throughout the year and promoting social cohesion.

It was requested that the section should provide fuller details regarding the need for schools to work closely together to understand the pupil's circumstances, particularly the needs of the vulnerable pupils.

Recommendation 6: The Council monitors and adopts appropriate milestones to close the gap in 5 GCSE levels attainment for white British children within the next 10 years.

The Committee discussed the ten year milestone for improving outcomes and the merits of reducing this to a five year milestone with greater monitoring. Mindful of the factors taking into account at the scrutiny review, the Committee agreed to retain the 10 year milestone. The Committee noted that this was a longstanding and an important issue that needed to be address. It was felt important that the Council should adopt and monitor appropriate milestones.

The Committee also stressed the need to focus on early year intervention and engagement with parents at this stage and requested that this be reflected in the report.

Recommendation 7: The Council works with schools and partners to support parents and young people with information around a range of education and career pathways, including those into university.

The Committee expressed a wish for this to be young person led and reflect the type of support they wanted. It should include details of the age range.

- Employment Aspirations.

Recommendation 14: The Council promotes the benefits of apprenticeships with parents and carers

This should state parents and guardians.

This should contain more information on Apprenticeships in terms of reasons for the take up, expenditure and the Apprenticeships levy.

At the invitation of the Chair, the young representatives commented on the report. They felt that consideration should be given to providing information on a digital forum. They also stressed the need to target younger secondary school children in terms of raising aspiration as they felt they would be most receptive at that age.

The Chair Moved and it was:

RESOLVED:

1. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the report and recommendations and the Committee's comments are taken into account.

5.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2018-2019

The Committee received and noted the Annual Report that provided a summary of the work the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Health, Housing and Grants Sub Committees and Scrutiny Leads have delivered in the 2018-2019 municipal year. A revised copy would be circulated to Members.

The Scrutiny Lead for Resources and Chair of the Grants Scrutiny Sub – Committee asked for an update on the resubmission of A12 Acoustic Barrier proposals to the Grants Committees.

The Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Agree the report for submission to Full Council in the new municipal year; and
2. Authorise the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy & Performance amend the report in consultation with the Chair before submission to Full Council.

6. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

The Committee was advised that no requests to submit any petition's had been received for consideration at this meeting.

**7. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG
2019/20**

Item deferred

8. CABINET FORWARD PLAN & WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Committee received and noted the published Cabinet Forward.

9. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

The Committee was advised that no unrestricted reports had been "called in".

10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Councillor Marc Francis Scrutiny Lead for Resources informed the Committee that there would be a Scrutiny Challenge session on Customer Access /One Stop Shops on 8th June.

He also reminded the Committee of the Scrutiny Challenge session on 30th April regarding Children's Services.

11. 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

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

Nil items

13. 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.

14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items

15. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

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

Nil items

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

Nil items

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

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

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6.2 Strategic Plan:	
Questions	Response
	<p>Strategic Plan measures have been developed through a rigorous process to identify a set of measures that measures the impact of the council's actions at a strategic outcome level. This reflects the council's agreed move towards outcome based accountability instead of focusing on outputs. In addition, measures need to meet a set of technical requirements such as being available at least quarterly to track progress, being based on a robust and reliable methodology being capable of covering the whole range of an outcome within no more than 5 to 6 outcome measures. Alongside the strategic outcome measures, services continue to use other data sets and information to monitor their operational performance and resource prioritisation. Effective and efficient service delivery at operational level should in turn lead to improved outcome measure performance meaning that measures in the strategic plan provide a holistic view of impact.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 4: Should we measure the number of rough sleepers? • Outcome 5: Should we measure the effectiveness of the waste strategy: e.g. number of missed collections/residents' satisfaction? • Outcome 9: should we measure how many decisions are changed following resident consultation? 	<p>Specific comments in relation to questions:</p> <p>Outcome 4: The number of rough sleepers is collected once a year in the form of an on street audit “snapshot” and quarterly through the CHAIN statistics (collected across London). Rough sleeping counts inform service provision and prioritisation, however. Wider outcome measures for homelessness have been included in outcomes 4 and 8.</p> <p>Outcome 5: The overarching strategic aim of the waste strategy is to reduce waste and to increase the level of recycling. The level of household recycling measures the impact and effectiveness of the strategy in delivering its overarching aims. While missed collections and resident satisfaction continue to be monitored by the service, they would be more appropriate to measuring subsidiary aims of the waste strategy rather than its overarching strategic aims of waste reduction and recycling.</p> <p>Outcome 9: The council has an existing measure to assess residents' perception of being involved in Council decision-making and this has been included in the strategic plan. The measure has existing trend data and allows us to benchmark against other councils.</p>
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<p>6.5 Growth and Economic Development</p>	
<p>Questions</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the biggest issues preventing small business generation is the lack of affordable commercial space. How does the strategy aim to resolve this issue? 	<p>The lack of affordable space in the borough is driven by two factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tower Hamlets Central Business District locations in City Fringe and Canary Wharf which are inherently prestigious and expensive and 2. the declining volume of space elsewhere, where previously industrial spaces have fallen into disuse, been converted to retail (e.g. railway arches) or demolished and replaced with residential development. <p>Our new Local Plan already addresses the first issue by requiring that 10% of any new commercial workspace developed be affordable. The Growth and Economic Development Plan seeks to tackle general scarcity through planning interventions (to create the most needed types of workspace) and direct investment. Re-growing our commercial property base outside the expensive CBD will increase supply and therefore reduce upward market pressure on rents.</p>

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