

Committee <b>STANDARDS</b>	Date <b>21<sup>st</sup> April 2009</b>	Classification <b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	Agenda Item No.
Report of Service Head, Democratic Services  Originating Officer(s): John Williams	Title <b>MEMBERS' TIMESHEETS AND ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEES/PANELS</b>  Wards affected ALL		

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the completion of timesheets and attendance at meetings by Members of the Council. Some amendments to the format and content of the report have been made in accordance with Members' previous comments.
- 1.2 Following discussion at the October 2008 meeting about additional information that could be included in future monitoring reports, this report makes a number of proposals in this regard. It also suggests some further areas where the Committee could contribute to the Council's work to enhance the support available to Councillors and the transparency and accountability of their roles.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee:
- (i) Note the position on the submission of Members' timesheets and attendance at formal meetings during the current municipal year;
  - (ii) Determine the frequency of future monitoring reports to the Committee; and
  - (iii) Comment on the suggestions at section 6 of the report regarding possible additional information to be included in future reports and other improvements to the monitoring arrangements.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Tower Hamlets Councillors have, since April 2002, completed monthly timesheets detailed the time spent during the month on council duties, split into categories such as surgeries, casework, attendance at meetings and external bodies etc. An example of the timesheet is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Since April 2004 the Standards Committee has received regular monitoring reports on the completion of Members' timesheets and attendance by Members at Council and other formal meetings.

- 3.3 Completion of timesheets is not a statutory requirement and does not affect the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid to Members. However, the London Councils Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors have emphasised the need for an accountable and transparent allowances scheme. In their 2001 report, the Independent Panel identified the tasks and responsibilities which they believed were the essential remit of a Councillor. In proposing a Basic Allowance to apply to all Councillors, they assumed a “contribution” of 40 hours per month on top of a “voluntary commitment” of 20 hours for each Member.
- 3.4 Members’ timesheets can be viewed via the ‘Meet your Councillor’ pages of the Council’s website which also contains information on the ward represented, committee appointments, surgeries and contact details. The timesheets account for Members’ time spent on Council duties and reflect work undertaken on behalf of constituents, much of it outside the Town Hall reflecting the growing demands on Members as community representatives and leaders. Members are themselves responsible for the submission and content of their timesheets and staff in the Members’ Support Team and the respective Group Political Advisors are available to assist as necessary.
- 3.5 In relation to attendance at committee/panel meetings, again this is not a statutory requirement - the law simply says that if a Councillor fails to attend any Council or other qualifying meeting for a period of six months, he/she shall cease to be a Member of the local authority - and it is accepted that many important Council duties take place outside formal meetings. Nevertheless, attendance at meetings to which he/she has been appointed does represent a key part of a Councillor’s work and the combination of attendance and timesheet monitoring information in this report provides a useful picture of a Councillor’s activity for the purpose of accountability.

#### **4. THE CURRENT POSITION**

##### **Timesheets**

- 4.1 In relation to the submission of timesheets, the current position (as at 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009) is set out in Appendix 2 attached. This indicates that 15 Members (29%) are currently more than three full months behind with their timesheets. This information will continue to be updated and a revised schedule will be tabled at the meeting, if necessary.
- 4.2 In the event that the tabled schedule shows any Member still significantly in arrears, the Committee may wish to follow previous practice and ask the Chair to write to that Member.

##### **Attendance at meetings**

- 4.3 The chart at Appendix 3 shows the attendance of Councillors at formal constitutional meetings during the current Municipal Year (i.e. from 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009).

## 5. CHANGES TO THE CURRENT REPORT

- 5.1 This is the latest in a series of regular update reports which have been submitted to the Standards Committee over the past five years. On the last occasion (October 2008) the Committee discussed ways in which the information reported could be enhanced.
- 5.2 It was agreed that detailed information on attendance at informal and discretionary meetings such as scrutiny working groups and LAP events was no longer required, but that greater prominence should be given to monitoring attendance at the formal Council committees. In relation to quasi-judicial meetings where attendance is drawn from a pool of trained Councillors, for example Licensing and Appeals Sub-Committees, the report should indicate for each Member the percentage attendance at meetings for which he/she was eligible.
- 5.3 The attached appendices have been updated to reflect these changes.

## 6. SUGGESTED FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS AND ADDITIONAL WORK

- 6.1 The completion of timesheets is not a statutory duty or a requirement of the Members' declaration of acceptance of office but a voluntary system developed at Tower Hamlets to enhance transparency. The Council and the Standards Committee have placed great importance on the timely and accurate completion of timesheets and the monitoring arrangements in place have promoted accountability and placed Tower Hamlets at the forefront of best practice in this area. Research reported previously to the Committee has shown that very few other local authorities have any such formal monitoring system in place.
- 6.2 The Committee has previously discussed how to build on this good practice and enhance the monitoring reports and accountability still further. In the light of those discussions the following suggestions are made for possible future improvements and the Committee's comments are invited on these:-
- **Date of completion:** Rather than merely presenting a snapshot of timesheets completed as at the date of the Standards Committee meeting, the schedule could indicate when each timesheet was submitted, thereby providing a means to monitor completion on a continuous basis.
  - **Content:** The current monitoring arrangements report whether or not timesheets have been completed but do not include information on their content. Members have asked whether some information e.g. the number of hours recorded could be shown. This is possible but a single headline figure may not provide sufficient information and a more meaningful analysis of the categories would mean quite lengthy reports. The full timesheets for each Councillor are readily available on the Council's website and it is therefore not suggested that this analysis should be included at this stage.

- **Sickness/apologies for absence:** In relation to non-attendance at meetings, the Committee has previously asked that where this is due to sickness or other known cause, this be noted; and that the schedule should indicate whether or not apologies were submitted and/or a substitute arranged. This change has not been possible for the current report but is planned for future meetings.
  - **Frequency of reports:** The Committee agreed in January to give further consideration, as part of the current discussion, to the frequency of the monitoring reports (i.e. six-monthly as currently or alternatively at each (quarterly) meeting of the Committee.)
- 6.3 In relation to changes to the format of the timesheets themselves and the categories included, due to pressure of other work it has unfortunately not been possible yet to commence consultation with Councillors as planned. This will be taken forward in the coming weeks. Members have previously commented that the existing format does not facilitate easy recording of some duties such as background reading on key issues or ad hoc informal meetings with residents. In addition a number of the specific categories included on the timesheet (see appendix 1) are now out of date.
- 6.4 Looking more generally at the Council's work to enhance transparency and the Committee's key role to promote and monitor the ethical governance framework, two further areas are suggested for consideration:-
- **Updates to the register of Members' interests:** Members are required to complete a register of their interests within 28 days of becoming a Councillor and subsequently receive six-monthly reminders to update the register with any changes (or a nil return if appropriate). The monitoring report could include at the relevant time information on these update returns.
  - **Attendance at training events:** In the same way, the Committee will wish to be assured of Councillors' attendance at relevant mandatory training events such as those on the Code of Conduct and the specific sessions arranged for members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees. This information is reported to the Committee on an ad hoc basis but could in future be incorporated into the periodic monitoring reports.
- 6.5 Finally, a key element in accountability is clarity on the duties that Members may be expected to perform and the support available to them in their various roles. A number of authorities have developed role descriptions for Councillors and the London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel has also drafted a range of framework documents. Building on the work of the Member Learning and Development Working Group and the Member Development Charter assessment, officers and Members will be progressing this matter over the coming months and it is suggested that the Standards Committee would wish to comment on this area of work as it develops.

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

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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

8.1 The Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001 details principles which are to govern the conduct of Members of relevant authorities in England and police authorities in Wales. The Schedule sets out a number of general principles, including that Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities. The schedule is attached as an appendix to the revised Code of Conduct for Members adopted by Tower Hamlets Council on 11 September 2007.

## **9. IMPLICATIONS FOR ONE TOWER HAMLETS**

9.1 There are no specific implications for One Tower Hamlets arising from the proposals in this report.

## **10. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no specific anti-poverty issues arising from the proposals in this report.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no risk management implications.

## **12. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT (SAGE)**

12.1 There are no SAGE implications arising directly from this report.

---

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97) LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

Brief description of "background paper"

Name and telephone number  
of holder and address where  
open to inspection

Reports by the Independent Panel on the  
Remuneration of Councillors in London

John Williams 020 7364 4204  
Town Hall, Mulberry Place,  
5 Clove Crescent, London,  
E14 2BG

MEMBERS TIMESHEET

<b>MEMBERS NAME:</b>	
<b>MONTH:</b>	
<b>NUMBER OF SURGERIES HELD:</b>	
<b>NUMBER OF CASES:</b>	
<b>HOLIDAY AND ANNUAL LEAVE:</b>	
<b>SICK:</b>	
<b>COUNCIL MEETINGS ATTENDED</b>	<b>TIME SPENT</b>
<b>EXTERNAL BODIES MEETINGS</b>	<b>TIME SPENT</b>
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>TIME SPENT</b>
<i>(Please enter total time spent on any of the following – you do not need to enter the number of meetings)</i>	
Chair's Pre Agenda Meetings	
Citizenship Ceremony	
Civic Receptions	
Community Events	
Conferences	
Corporate Parenting Steering Group	
Group Meetings	
Holiday/s	
LAB Meetings	
Learning, Achievement & Leisure (CPAG)	
Living Well (CPAG)	
Local Area Partnership (LAP)	
Mayoral Engagements	
Meeting with Council Officer/s	
Meeting with Councillor/s	
Meeting with other organisations	
Members Training Sessions/Seminar	
MP/MEP/Minster -Meetings	
NDC Meetings	
Olympic Bid	
Paperwork, Reading & Telephone Calls	
School Governors Meeting	
Site Visits	
Tenants/Residents Meeting	
Time Spent on Casework	
Time Spent at Surgery	
Working Party	

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED TIMESHEET TO PATRICIA ATTAWIA, MAYOR'S OFFICE MANAGER**

**MEMBERS MONTHLY DIARY SHEETS – SUMMARY OF RETURNS**  
**MADE FROM APRIL 2008 TO MARCH 2009**

Councillor	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Abbas, H	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Ahmed, A M O	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Ahmed, R.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ahmed, R. U.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ali, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Ali, Md. Shahid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ali, Shahed		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Archer, T	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Asad, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Begum, L	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Briscoe, P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Choudhury, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eaton, S	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Eckhardt, R	✓	✓										
Francis, M	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Golds, P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Haque, F	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Haque, S	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Harper-Penman, C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Hawkins, C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Heslop, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Houghton, S	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Hussain, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Islam, S	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Islam, W	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Jackson, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Jones, D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Jones, E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Khan, A. R.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Khan, R	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Khatun, S	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matin, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Miah, A	✓	✓	✓									
Miah, F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Miah, H	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Munim, M. A.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
O'Flaherty, T		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Omer, A.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Peck, J	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rahman, L		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rahman, O	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Rashid, Md. M.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Salique, M. A.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sardar, A. A.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Saunders, R	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓		
Snowdon, D	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Turner, B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Uddin, D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Ullah, A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Ullah, S	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Uz-Zaman, M	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						

**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE – 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2008 – 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2009**

**APPENDIX 3**

	Council	Cabinet	Dev Cttee	Licensing Cttee	O & S Cttee	Health Scrutiny Panel	Standards Cttee	Pensions Cttee	Human Resources Cttee	Appeals Cttee	Appnt's Sub Cttee	General Purposes Cttee	Strategic Dev Cttee	Licensing Sub-Cttee	Audit Cttee	Grants Panel
Total Held	6	11	11	3	11	4	3	2	2	6	7	5	6	37	4	3
Abbas	6		1(dep)					1			***4			*11 (29%)	4	
O. Ahmed	5	8														
R. Ahmed	5			1												
R. U. Ahmed	6	11														
A. Ali	6	8														
Shahed Ali	5		(7) 3		(3) 3								(5) 4			
M. Shahid Ali	6		1 (dep)									****5	5			
Archer	6												(1) 1			
Asad	5				10											
Bawden (until 5.10.08)	(2) 2			0										(13) *0		
Begum	4		(5) 1		1 (dep)	(2) 0	1					(2) 2	1			
Briscoe	6								(0)		***2		4			
A. Choudhury	6	11					3		2							
Eaton	6		2 (dep)		7	4						1 (dep)	6		1	
Eckhardt	6		(4) 4	(1) 0									1 (dep)	(11) 3 (27%)	(2) 2	
Francis	6	11						1			***3	1 (dep)	3 (dep)			2
Golds	6			(1) 1	3 (dep)									(11) *2 (18%)		
Haque, F	5		4	1					0				1 (dep)	*12 (32%)		
Haque, S	6		11	3							***2	1	6	*11 (29%)		
Harper-Penman	4										***2					
Hawkins	6	11														3
Heslop	5		8	2		(2) 0	3							*10 (27%)		
Houghton	6			(1) 1			(1) 1							(11) *3 (27%)		

**QUALIFYING NOTES:**

- This schedule denotes the attendance of Members at Council, Cabinet and the Standing Committees of the Council only and does not include ad-hoc advisory panels that some Members serve on.*
- Care should be taken in calculating the attendance of members in percentage terms, as, for instance, not all Members of the Appeals Committee would be summoned to serve on every Appeal.*
- Some Members are appointed to more Standing Committees/Panels than others, therefore making a precise comparison of attendance between Members is often inappropriate because of opportunity.*
- Members sometimes attend meetings in a substitute capacity for their colleagues.*

\* Part of pool of Members to sit on Licensing Sub-Committees

\*\* Part of pool of Members to sit on Appeals Committees

\*\*\* As required for Appointments Sub-Committee

\*\*\*\* General Purposes Committee – one meeting in quorate



**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE – 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2008 – 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2009**

**APPENDIX 3**

	Council	Cabinet	Dev Cttee	Licensing Cttee	O & S Cttee	Health Scrutiny Panel	Standards Cttee	Pensions Cttee	Human Resources Cttee	Appeals Cttee	Appnts Sub Cttee	General Purposes Cttee	Strategic Dev Cttee	Licensing Sub-Cttee	Audit Cttee	Grants Panel
Total Held	6	11	11	3	11	4	3	2	2	6	7	5	6	37	4	3
Hussain	5				(4) 2					**1(1) 0	***2					
S. Islam	5	10									***5					
W. Islam	6		1 (dep)	1	8				2					*5 (13%)		
Jackson	5				8	3	3			**3 (50%)						
D. Jones	6		5					1							3	
Dr. E. Jones	6					(1) 1										
A. R. Khan	6			3									2 (dep)	*10 (27%)		
R. Khan	6						0		0	**2 (33%)			2 (dep)			
Khatun	5				9			1		**1 (16%)	***3					
Matin	6				(9) 8	2	0							*2 (5%)	0	
A. Miah	6			1	1 dep					**3 (50%)						
F. Miah	6		1 (dep)													
H. Miah	6		5 (mem)													
Munim	4								0							
O'Flaherty	6		4		1 dep		1 (dep)			1 (dep)	***2	***3	1 (dep)			
Omer	6		6							**4 (66%)			6			
Peck	6	10						1	1				4			3
L. Rahman	6	11									***7					
O. Rahman	4			1	4								1 (dep)	*9 (24%)		
Rashid	5			0	1 (dep)							1		*9 (24%)		
Salique	6					(2) 0										0
Sardar	6				11							4				
Saunders	(3) 3			(1) 1										(14) *2 (14%)		
Snowdon	6				(4) 4			(0)								
Turner	6			1	8	3				**4 (66%)	***2			*3 (8%)		
Uddin	6									1 (dep)			3			
A. Ullah	6	10									***1					3
S. Ullah	6									**5 (83%)		3				
Uz-Zaman	6			2		(2) 1				**2 (33%)				*9 (24%)		

**QUALIFYING NOTES:**

- This schedule denotes the attendance of Members at Council, Cabinet and the Standing Committees of the Council only and does not include ad-hoc advisory panels that some Members serve on.*
- Care should be taken in calculating the attendance of members in percentage terms, as, for instance, not all Members of the Appeals Committee would be summoned to serve on every Appeal.*
- Some Members are appointed to more Standing Committees/Panels than others, therefore making a precise comparison of attendance between Members is often inappropriate because of opportunity.*
- Members sometimes attend meetings in a substitute capacity for their colleagues.*

\* Part of pool of Members to sit on Licensing Sub-Committees

\*\* Part of pool of Members to sit on Appeals Committees

\*\*\* As required for Appointments Sub-Committee

\*\*\*\* General Purposes Committee – one meeting in quorate