

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 9 JUNE 2009

**M71, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Sirajul Islam (Chair)
Councillor Tim Archer
Councillor Alexander Heslop
Councillor Ann Jackson
Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Abjol Miah
Councillor A A Sardar
Councillor Bill Turner (Vice-Chair)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Ohid Ahmed
Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Oliur Rahman

Co-opted Members Present:

Mr Ahbab Miah – Parent Governor Representative
Mr H Mueenuddin – Muslim Community Representative

Officers Present:

Lutfur Ali – (Assistant Chief Executive)
Michael Keating – (Service Head, Scrutiny & Equalities)
Afazul Hoque – (Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager)
David Galpin – (Head of Legal Services (Community))
Stephanie Ford – (Performance Manager)
Kael Long – (Performance Officer)
Jebin Syeda – (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

COUNCILLOR SIRAJUL ISLAM IN THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the new Municipal Year.

Councillor Islam also asked the Committee to note that a Scrutiny Away Day had been arranged for 20th June 2009 between 9.30am and 1.00pm at The Royal Foundation of St. Katharine. The purpose of the day would be to have a short induction followed by the development of the annual scrutiny work programme.

MOVED by Councillor A A Sardar, **Seconded** by Councillor Alexander Heslop and

RESOLVED

That Councillor Bill Turner be elected Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the current Municipal Year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephanie Eaton.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In response to a question from Councillor Denise Jones concerning standing declarations of interest, Mr David Galpin, Legal Advisor to the Committee, advised that any declarations of interest should only relate to items due to be considered on the agenda and it was not necessary to have standing declarations.

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 5 May April 2009 be agreed as a correct record.

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURES

5.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference, Protocols and Guidance

Mr Michael Keating, Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities, introduced the report detailing the Committee's Terms of Reference, protocols for Members and the procedures for the receipt of deputations and petitions.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference be noted and that the protocols and guidance be agreed.

5.2 Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Appointment of Six Lead Scrutiny Members/Establishment of the Health Scrutiny Panel / Co-options to the Committee

Miss Amanda Thompson introduced the report and advised the Committee of the need to agree the new scrutiny lead portfolios and lead members based on the Community Plan themes.

RESOLVED

1. That the membership of the Committee be noted;
2. That the Scrutiny Lead Portfolios based on the Community Plan be agreed and the following Scrutiny Leads be appointed:-

Councillor Alexander Heslop – A Great Place to Live
Councillor A A Sardar – A Prosperous Community
Councillor Denise Jones – A Safe and Supportive Community
Councillor Tim Archer – A Healthy Community
Councillor Ann Jackson – One Tower Hamlets
Councillor Bill Turner – Excellent Public Services

3. That the establishment of the Health Scrutiny Panel and the appointment of Members thereto as detailed below be noted;

Councillor Tim Archer (Chair)
Councillor Lutfa Begum
Councillor Stephanie Eaton
Councillor Alexander Heslop
Councillor Ann Jackson
Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Abjol Miah

4. That the current details of the nominated/co-opted Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the report be noted; and
5. That the intention to seek independent Members from the Local Involvement Network for co-option to the Health Scrutiny Panel be noted.

5.3 Schedule of Dates

Miss Amanda Thompson introduced the report detailing the schedule of meeting dates for the new Municipal year. The Committee were asked to note that the meeting on 1 September 2009 would begin at 5.30pm, and not 7pm, to take account of Ramadan.

Councillor Bill Turner asked if it would be possible to consult all Members of the Committee regarding the order and timing of agenda items for 1 September in case not everyone was able to attend the start of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the schedule of dates for meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2009/2010 be noted, and all Members be consulted regarding the agenda for 1 September.

6. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

None.

7. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS

None.

8. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

There were no Section One reports 'called in' from the meeting of Cabinet held on 6 May 2009.

9. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ISSUES

9.1 Strategic Plan 2009/10-11/12: Year 1 Action Plan and Outline Plan

Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Lead Member, Resources and Performance, introduced the report which detailed the Community Plan themes and priorities, key progress measures as well as the strategic activities that the Council would deliver during the coming year.

He also drew the Committee's attention to the Year 1 Action Plan which detailed the milestones, lead members and officers for each of the strategic activities, and included tables of recent performance and future targets relating to the Council's Strategic Indicators.

Arising from the discussion a number of points were made which it was agreed should be referred to Cabinet for consideration as set out below:

RESOLVED:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee broadly welcomed the Strategic Plan and the target areas that the Cabinet has identified as priorities over the coming 12 months including tackling crime, improving employment rates, promoting community cohesion, improving housing, increasing recycling and maximising the benefits to the Borough derived from the Olympics. The Committee also emphasised a number of items as needing priority attention within the plans and which the Cabinet should consider in its debate on the adoption of the plan.

The Committee highlighted that the format of the Plan was not clear in helping to understand what the targets meant and asked the Lead Member to ensure that this is clarified in future.

The Committee wish to reinforce to Cabinet the importance of engaging the community in the Olympics and the need to ensure that there are various initiatives targeted to engage all sections of the community.

The Committee supported the Cabinet's recognition of the importance of reducing energy use and use more renewable energy sources. In particular the Committee emphasised the need to change the personal life styles of residents to achieve these targets.

Finally the Committee wish to reinforce to Cabinet the importance of continuing its improvements in delivering on its set targets within the Strategic Plan. The Committee also believe that the Council should be benchmarking itself against other Boroughs, particularly the leading performers in each area, and thus driving forward its own goals and performance.

10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

10.1 Diversity & Equality Action Plan 2008-09 - End of Year Monitoring Report

Councillor Josh Peck, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the end of year progress report on the Council's Diversity and Equality Action Plan for 2008/9 which demonstrated that the Council was continuing to make good progress on the implementation of the diversity and equality agenda, and had responded effectively to recent changes in legislation and policy.

In response to questions Councillor Peck advised that the new 'Transgender' equality strand would need to be incorporated, and that the Pan Disability Panel was on target to launch in July 2009.

Councillor Peck further advised that although there were two red indicators that related to the Olympics, the Council's contribution to the Olympic Legacy Masterplan had been submitted to the LDA and a response was awaited. In response to a question concerning the role of the Council's Olympic Ambassador, Councillor Peck advised that all of the Cabinet portfolios contained an element of the Olympics within them, but the Ambassador's role was to try and involve local residents and work to ensure benefits to the community.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

11. SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

11.1 Affordable Homeownership - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group

The Chair introduced the report submitting the recommendations of the Affordable Homeownership Working Group for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Tim Archer suggested that it would also be important to consider exactly what was 'affordable' to local people as many could still not afford intermediate rent levels.

Councillor Alex Heslop stated that he welcomed the recommendation for a full feasibility study to consider the development of a local community land trust model as these appeared to be much more affordable than some of the other low cost home ownership options, especially now that land values had fallen as a result of the credit crunch, and now was a good time to seriously consider it as an option.

RESOLVED

1. To agree that the draft report be taken forward for submission to Cabinet, and
2. That the Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities be authorised to agree the final report before its submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Scrutiny Lead for A Great Place to Live.

12. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS

The Chair **moved** and it was **RESOLVED**

That the following Section 1 pre-decision questions be submitted to Cabinet for consideration:

Agenda Item 8.1 Amendment to the Statement of Community Involvement (CAB 001/090)

1. Many local residents raise concerns with councillors about small planning applications which officers have delegated authority to make decisions. This is an area where local residents feel that their views are not considered. Can the Cabinet consider reviewing this to find alternative ways residents' voices can be heard on smaller applications?
2. Will the Cabinet look into including local voluntary organisations such as the Ramblers Association and Bikers and statutory groups as standard consultees on all local planning applications?

Agenda Item 8.2 Contract for the Independent Review of Environmental Statements (CAB 002/090)

1. What is the Environment Impact Statement statutory consultation process and do we consult local residents on them?

Agenda Item 9.1 Children's Services Capital Programme (CAB 003/090)

1. Can the Cabinet tell us what they think may be the implications of investing this heavily on the Osmani Youth Centre site when there may be a need in the near future to spend this money on schools with government grants reducing?

Agenda Item 12.2 Disposal of various Council owned properties (CAB 005/089)

1. In regards to the disposal of the former workshop, 517a Commercial Road will the Cabinet ensure that Network Housing Group consider parking provision if the property is developed for disabled residents?

Agenda Item 12.3 Cabinet Sub Bodies 2009/10 Terms of Reference and Membership (CAB 006/090)

1. In Appendix A of the report a list of Working Parties and Advisory Bodies currently established are listed. Can the Cabinet consider establishing a new group or adding to the terms of reference of one these groups on how we deal with issues arising from the London City Airport?

13. ANY OTHER SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

None.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That, under 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 were 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 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.

15. SECTION TWO REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

There were no Section Two reports 'called in' from the meeting of Cabinet held on 6 May 2009

16. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS

The Chair **moved** and it was **RESOLVED**

That all the Section 2 pre-decision questions received be submitted to Cabinet for consideration:

17. ANY OTHER SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm

Chair, Councillor Sirajul Islam