

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 25 JUNE 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)

Councillor Sufia Alam

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

Councillor Kahar Chowdhury

Councillor Dipa Das

Councillor James King

Councillor Kyrsten Perry

Councillor Mohammed Pappu

Councillor Bex White

Councillor Andrew Wood

Co-opted Members Present:

Joanna Hannan

Dr Phillip Rice

- Lead for Resources
- Lead for Children's Services
- Lead for Health, Adults and Community
- Lead for Place
- Lead for Governance
- Representative of Diocese of Westminster
- Church of England Representative

Other Councillors Present:

Mayor John Biggs

Officers Present:

Elizabeth Bailey

Janet Fasan

Afazul Hoque

David Knight

- Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
- (Divisional Director, Legal)
- (Head Corporate Strategy & Policy)
- (Principal Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received for this meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Ullah invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for the duration of the Municipal Year. Accordingly, Councillor Mark Francis was nominated and seconded and it was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mark Francis be appointed Vice-Chair of OSC for the duration of the municipal year.

3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

Nil Items

4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd March, 2018

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd March, 2018 to be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4.2 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd May, 2018

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd May, 2018 to be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

5. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items

6. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG 2018/2019

The Committee received and noted the Query and Action Log 2018/2019.

As a result of consideration on the Log the Committee indicated that It would wish to see scrutiny meetings held at venues throughout Tower Hamlets and to review the progress being made in implementing the Mayor's Transparency Protocol and the recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Transparency Commission report.

7. CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair reminded the Committee that the Work Programming Workshop would be on the 30th June, 2108 at the Shadwell Centre and Sunita Sharma from the Centre for Public Scrutiny would be facilitating the session. This would include a Horizon Scanning session for each directorate so that members' could explore their prioritisation criteria (Including a strategic focus on outcomes and improved service delivery).

8. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

9. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

The Committee received and noted copies and those pre-decision scrutiny questions that had been received regarding the Cabinet agenda for the 27th June, 2018 and were asked to let the Chair have any comments that they might have on these questions by 12:00 noon on the 26th June, 2018.

10. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

10.1 Mayor John Biggs

The Committee received a presentation from Mayor John Briggs highlighting a number of key issues in relation to his vision for the 2018/2019 Municipal year. The questions and comments from Members on the report may be summarised as follows:

The Committee:

- Noted the specific focus of the Mayor on the Work Path initiative; Affordable Housing, Investment in additional Police Officers and action on improved Air Quality;
- Noted that the Mayor was proposing potential changes in the governance arrangements;
- Commented that local and sub-regional areas have been working to make rapid improvements to health and care within existing powers and exploring how more local powers, resources and decision-making could accelerate the improvements that Londoners want to see at the most appropriate and local level. Different parts of London have diverse communities, health challenges and quality of health and care services. It is therefore entirely appropriate that consideration should

be given to different solutions being developed for different areas and that enabling tools, such as devolution, could be adopted at different pace and scale based on local appetite; and

- It was also noted that whilst transparency and accountability remain a matter of real interest and concern to local people, the Annual Residents Survey (ARS) 2017/18 results had shown that 79% of residents trust the Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' - up 7 points on last year, and well above the trust rating for councils nationally (59%). 59% also had agreed that the Council is 'open and transparent about its activities' - up 7 points on last year. 72% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things - close to last year's rating and a historical high – and 78% felt the Council was doing a good job - up 6 points over the year. Despite this, it is still recognised that there is still further work to do, and that the Mayor remains committed to the Council becoming a more open and transparent organisation.

11. STRENGTHENING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN 2018-19

The Committee received and noted a report that reviewed the overview and scrutiny arrangements of the Council against the national, regional and local context to assess its effectiveness to date and identify areas for improvement.

The questions and comments from Members on the report may be summarised as follows:

The Committee

- Noted that the report had made 14 recommendations intended to strengthen scrutiny in 2018-19 and outlined out how these will be implemented;
- Noted the Communities and Local Government Committee (the Select Committee) carried out the first comprehensive assessment of scrutiny arrangements, since their introduction by the Local Government Act 2000, and published its final report in December 2017 (the Select Committee Report);
- Was informed that the Select Committee Report, entitled 'effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees', makes 21 recommendations focusing on the themes of organisational culture, parity of esteem between scrutiny and the executive, independence, member training and skills, role of the public and scrutinising public services delivered by external organisations; and
- Was advised that in March 2018, the Government had published its response to the Select Committee Report and accepted most but not all of the recommendations aimed at the Government (Government Response);
- Noted that the Government Response notes that scrutiny plays a vital role in ensuring local accountability on a wide range of local issues and

comments that the Government is committed to ensuring that councils (i) are aware of the importance of scrutiny; (ii) understand the benefits of effective scrutiny; and (iii) have access to best practice to inform Councils' thinking;

- Indicated that it wished to see an increased focus on Air Quality and greater proliferation/maintenance of electric charging points has been specified by the Mayor in the coming year; and
- Noted that the Mayor feels that there is a need to actively engage with both the younger and senior citizens in the community to create a greater sense of sport engagement.

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

The Chair comments that it was disappointing that the upcoming Mela would not be broadcasted and that this was a missed commercial and awareness opportunity.

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 7.58 p.m.

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