

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.33 P.M. ON MONDAY, 28 JANUARY 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 James King	
Councillor Kyrsten Perry	
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	
Councillor Bex White	– Lead for Governance
Councillor Andrew Wood	

**Co-opted Members Present:**

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

**Other Councillors Present:**

Mayor John Biggs	
Councillor Asma Begum	– (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities)
Councillor Candida Ronald	– (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)

**Apologies:**

Councillor Dipa Das	– Lead for Place
Khoyrul Shaheed	– Muslim Faith Community

**Others Present:**

Elizabeth Bailey	– (Strategy & Policy Manager)
Adam Boey	– (Senior Strategy & Policy Manager - Corporate)
Ann Corbett	– (Divisional Director, Community Safety)
Jack Gilbert	– Vice Chair – Safer Neighbourhood Board
Sharon Godman	– (Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Afazul Hoque	– (Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Neville Murton	– (Acting Corporate Director, Resources)
Denise Radley	– (Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Simon Smith	– Prevent Co-ordinator
Sue Williams	– Borough Commander - Chief Superintendent
David Knight	– (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**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:

**2.1 Minutes - 17th December, 2018**

The unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings. Copy to sign

**2.2 Minutes - 14th January, 2019**

The unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings. Copy to sign

### **3. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT**

#### **3.1 Community Safety- Safer Neighbourhood Board**

The Committee received a presentation from Jack Gilbert, Vice- Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods Board it was noted that the role and purpose of Safer Neighbourhood Boards is to be the primary borough-level mechanism for local engagement and as such, the Board has five key aims to:

- I. ensure communities are more closely involved in problem solving and crime prevention;
- II. have a broad remit to reflect Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPaC's) broader responsibilities, while respecting the view that local people know best what is needed at the local level;
- III. have greater reach and ensure a more frequent refresh of ideas and views;
- IV. achieve greater coherence between different engagement mechanisms, e.g. ward panels, Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), Neighbourhood Watch and Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups, so as to provide greater public accountability in policing and crime reduction; and
- V. Make more efficient use of resources to deliver value for money and target funds at tackling issues of local concern and crime prevention.

The discussions arising out of consideration of this presentation are summarised as follows:

The Committee:

- Noted that details on the number of active Ward Panels would be made available and that the Safer Neighbourhood Board was an amalgamation of those groups in the previous community engagement structure, such as Police Consultative Groups and it had also to establish working relationships with other engagement and oversight functions such as the local ward panels and neighbourhood cluster panels, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, Independent Advisory Groups and the Boroughs Community Safety Partnership;
- Noted that there were neighbourhood cluster panels for the North; South; East and West of the Borough to look at issues within a wider context. Also MOPaC are now working with the MPS (i) on producing data that can be more easily understood; (ii) to build confidence in the Panels; (iii) to support collaborative working between all participants; and (iv) look at the differences between wards;
- Indicated that it felt that there is a job of work to be undertaken so as to encourage the development of a membership that truly reflects the communities that it seeks to serve and has meaningful engagement with those communities;

- Expressed concern at the financial pressures faced by Safer Neighbourhood Teams which had required them to work differently making more effective use of reduced resources. Which it was felt had, had an impact upon the local police presence, reassurance and visibility;
- Noted that there is a need to understand that the cycle of violence and who the perpetrator is and who is the victim which can be a fluid; and
- Commented that it supported the idea of developing a true and robust engagement by Ward Panels so as to make the Borough better for residents.

In conclusion, Councillor Ullah thanked Jack Gilbert for his presentation.

### **3.2 Community Safety in the Borough**

The Committee will receive a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities Cllr Asma Begum; the Borough Commander, Sue Williams; and the Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community, Denise Radley.

The discussions on this presentation may be summarised as follows:

The Committee:

- Condemned the recent incident outside a school in Bow as Tower Hamlets is home to people from all over the world with a proud history which has been enriched by migration;
- Noted that through the use of Council CCTV and Council Funded Police Officers a man in his 60s had been taken into custody by police on suspicion of a racially aggravated public order offence;
- Noted that the Council and its partners are working with communities to develop a positive change in community safety and engagement;
- Noted that the Borough Commander and her officers had invested considerable energy in supporting the priorities within the partnership and addressing incidence of Anti-Social Behaviour; Knife Enabled Crime; Robbery; Theft; and Moped Offences;
- Noted that Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association (HARCA) has funded a dedicated 5-strong Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Team to work with their ASB and Safeguarding Teams;
- Noted that there are also more MPS officers on Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) housing estates. There will be 14 extra MPS officers funded by Tower Hamlets Council who will focus on tackling crime and ASB, working alongside THH's own ASB team;
- Noted that the MPS London borough model has been condensed from 32 to 12 Basic Command Units (BCU) made up of two or three boroughs (e.g. Hackney and Newham) the BCU structure will allow the MPS to put first victims of crime and those people in greatest need. It will also give the MPS the resilience and consistency it needs across the whole of London, so that the MPS can continue to respond to large scale incidents and meet the current financial and operational challenges;

- Noted that property crime can be prevented through manipulating the design of individual dwellings, and their relationship to one another and to the surrounding neighbourhood;
- Noted that the 101 service has gone to a digital platform as the public now expect the MPS to have a significant online presence, with a similar level of functionality and ease of use to other services they access on a daily basis;
- Noted with regard to hate crime a lot of work has been done on reporting e.g. disability reporting and it was noted in the BCU there are Faith/Hate Crime Officers based both in Hackney and LBTH who are there to help and support communities and victims;
- Noted that in terms of data there is a need to include people's experiences as data (e.g. the young voice) and to look at data from a strategic perspective and how the available data is shared across the various partners/stakeholder groups;
- Noted that whilst the Home Office has reclassified many incidences of burglary non-residential to residential the Partnership looks at such crimes as burglary as a whole;
- Noted that the Council is working closely with One Housing Group on the Isle of Dogs to prevent and deal with ASB. All reports of ASB are taken seriously by One Housing and they deal with them as efficiently and effectively as possible;
- Noted that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has praised the steps the MPS has taken to improve legitimacy. The MPS has a good understanding of the diverse communities of London and is working hard to improve engagement. The (HMICFRS) also recognised the MPS' efforts to improve the ethical and inclusive culture of the organisation;
- Noted that the reduction in public spending has made it more important than ever to maximise resources by the relevant partners working closely to deliver the best services possible for residents;
- Noted that the Boroughs BCU is seen as the lead in London in addressing a robust partnership community safety need;
- Noted that the MPS are open to ideas and look at different ways of working with their partner colleagues (e.g. Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers);
- Commented that it would support the development of a single number where all landlords could report incidences of ASB; and
- Commented that 'Safer Neighbourhood Board' which MOPaC introduced so as to formally consider local policing and crime priorities offered a less inclusive environment than the old Community Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs) that used to undertake community engagement around policing and crime issues in the Borough.

In conclusion, Councillor Ullah thanked Cllr Asma Begum; Sue Williams; and Denise Radley for their presentation.

### **3.3 Prevent**

The Committee received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities Cllr Asma Begum; the Divisional Director, Community Safety: Ann Corbett and Simon Smith Head of Prevent.

The discussions on this presentation are summarised as follows:

The Committee:

- Commented that communities perception of Prevent remains challenging as whilst the strategy was intended to help communities address radicalisation and extremism. It has instead it seems become a potential source of grievance for local communities. In response it was noted that the Channel process is a safeguarding process with robust assessment frameworks and built in checks and balances. In addition, the Borough has built upon its nationally recognised good practice in safeguarding those vulnerable to radicalisation;
- Noted that Prevent is one of the '4 P's' of the Government's CONTEST strategy;
- Was advised that the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 set out the legislative requirements on the Local Authority to deliver Prevent;
- Noted that all training addresses all the manifestations of extremism including the far right;
- Was informed that terrorism and extremism remains a significant threat to all our communities;
- Noted Tower Hamlets is assessed by the Home Office as one of the highest risk areas in London with regard counter terrorism;
- Noted if a referral was made in error it will be carefully reviewed and the individual will have the opportunity to respond to any allegations that has made feedback provided as appropriate;
- Noted that Ben Wallace the Security Minister has announced the Strategy is to be independently reviewed review;
- Asked to receive details of how young people have benefitted and have been safeguarded from radicalisation and ; and
- Noted that the swift response to the incident referred to above outside a school in Bow had sent a strong positive message to the local community.

In conclusion, Councillor Ullah thanked Cllr Asma Begum; Ann Corbett; and Simon Smith for their presentation.

## **4. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **4.1 Budget Scrutiny**

The Committee received an update report from Cllr Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector and Neville Murton, Acting Corporate Director of Resources – With particular reference to the Cabinet for 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.

The discussions on the report are outlined below:

The Committee noted:

- This report presented the final budget proposals that will be recommended for Full Council approval on the 20th February. It was noted that the assumptions set out in last year's MTFS for 2019-20 have been reviewed and updated to allow Members to agree a balanced budget and Council Tax requirement for that year;
- That announcements that have been made about Government funding for the Council in the Chancellor's Budget and the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement require a robust and timely response to enable a balanced budget to be set;
- That the Council is in the fourth and final year of the Governments 'guaranteed settlement';
- That a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covering the entirety of the resources available to the Council is considered to be the best way that resource prioritisation and allocation decisions can be considered and agreed in a way that provides a stable and considered approach to service delivery and takes into account relevant risks and uncertainty;
- As the Council develops its detailed proposals it must continue to keep under review those key financial assumptions which underpin the Council's MTFS; in particular as the Council becomes ever more dependent on locally raised sources of income through the Council Tax and retained business rates these elements become fundamental elements of its approach and strategies;
- The Council secures value for money through competitive tendering in terms of Capital Schemes;
- Detailed impact assessments would happen upon implementation'
- That the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is utilised and is embedded in various processes and officers need to consider if an EqIA is appropriate; and
- The Council needs to look at a package of incentive/charges on car use and the Mayor indicated that he would value from an oversight by Scrutiny.

In conclusion, Councillor Ullah thanked Cllr Ronald and Neville Murton for their presentation.

#### **4.2 Social Cohesion Challenge Session Report**

The Committee received and noted a report that followed up from the scrutiny challenge session on the Council's community cohesion services, which went to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 12 April, 2017 with 6 recommendations.

It was noted that the report reviewed the progress against the recommendations. The report also highlights that the Council is leading on

best practice in this area, as an example its role and involvement with London Councils to help develop the future approaches is noted and recognised. The report also recognises the range and scale of projects being undertaken by the Council, addressing cohesion in Tower hamlets. The report makes recommendations which aim to further enhance cohesion outcomes for the borough.

It was that the findings from the challenge session discussion, which included qualitative evidence from professionals both internally and external to the Council and councillors' practical experience in the field, have been supplemented by additional secondary sources. These include review of population statistics and trends, ward data, as well as consideration of the impact of legislation and findings from national reviews. The recommendations arising from this range of evidence sources are outlined below.

It was noted that the review had specifically looked at:

1. The definition of community cohesion;
2. National reviews related to cohesion;
3. The key findings from the Casey Review and to establish to what extent those findings were prevalent in Tower Hamlets by considering and comparing factual and statistical evidence;
4. The Council's Cohesion Programme which included a prima facie review of existing projects and funding;
5. The Council's approach to grants and the associated impact on improving cohesion outcomes;
6. Language as driver of cohesion, including a consideration of the effectiveness of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision;
7. The impact of council policies on cohesion such as the school admissions, housing and planning policies;
8. A consideration of the social and economic data and trends and the consequential impact on the gentrification of the borough; and
9. The context of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equalities Duty on the Council to foster good relations between people and the Council's leadership role on cohesion.

## **5. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

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

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

Noted

## **7. CABINET FORWARD PLAN & WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW**



Noted

**8. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

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

**9. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS**

Email updates for all OSC to review.

**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 9.33 p.m.**

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

