

Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date 6th April 2010	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive Originating Officer(s): Afazul Hoque Scrutiny Policy Manager		Title: <i>Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on Strengthening Local Community Leadership</i> Ward(s) affected: All		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report submits the report and recommendations of the Strengthening Local Community Leadership Working Group for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Agree the draft report.
- 2.2 Authorise the Service Head for Scrutiny and Equalities to amend the final report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Scrutiny Lead for One Tower Hamlets.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972 (AS AMENDED) SECTION 100D

LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Background paper	Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection
None	N/A

3. Background

- 3.1 To meet the challenges facing Tower Hamlets we know that the Council alone cannot achieve the outcomes which residents, councillors and partners desire. At the same time the local authority has a clear community leadership role to play. The challenge is to do this in partnership with other agencies and organisations. Recent proposals from central government are challenging us to think about what we might need to do to strengthen community leadership and participation.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Lead for One Tower Hamlets identified strengthening local community leadership as the key review for 2009/10 municipal year. In addressing the challenges posed by proposals from central government the review set out to do the following:
- Develop Member awareness of national drivers for strengthening the leadership role of Councillors;
 - Consider the response to the Strengthening Local Democracy consultation paper focusing on strengthening scrutiny of partnerships;
 - Develop proposals for strengthening local democracy and external scrutiny in the wider place shaping contest;
 - Test whether the CCfA proposal will be useful to Members in identifying local problems and developing local solutions;
 - Explore the use of CCfA with residents to ensure it will work for them;
 - Identify support for Members in exercising their community leadership role and in implementing CCfA.
- 3.3 The Working Group held a number of evidence gathering sessions with officers from the Council and various local stakeholders. This review specifically tested our local proposal for Councillor Call for Action which includes the development of a Performance Digest Report. The Working Group held a workshop with a number of local residents to explore how intractable issues can be resolved. It was noted that many of these issues do not have easy solutions and scrutiny provides a platform to bring together all the stakeholders to discuss those issues.
- 3.4 A number of recommendations have been put forward for consideration by the Council and Partnership. At the heart of these recommendations include the need to develop a new model of community leadership to support Members to engage with local residents more fully, secondly to increase resident participation in the democratic process and finally improve the partnership process.
- 3.5 The report with recommendations is attached at Appendix A. Once agreed, the Working Groups report will be submitted to Cabinet for a response to the recommendations.

4. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

- 4.1. The Council is required by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 (“the LGA 2000”) to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have

executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions. It is consistent with the Constitution and the statutory framework for Cabinet to provide a response.

- 4.2. The report contains recommendations which are capable of being carried out within the Council's statutory functions. The councillor call for action process is consistent with the Council's obligations under the LGA 2000 and raising awareness about it is an appropriate incidental matter. Community leadership is otherwise closely aligned with the key Community Plan theme of One Tower Hamlets and it may be possible to justify action by reference to the Council's well-being power in section 2 of the LGA 2000. If Cabinet supported the recommendations, it would be for officers to ensure that any action is carried out lawfully.

5. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

- 5.1 This report describes the review and recommendations of the Strengthening Local Community Leadership Working Group.
- 5.2 There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report but in the event that the Council agrees further action in response to this report's recommendations then officers will be obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made.

6. One Tower Hamlets consideration

- 6.1 This review explored a key aspect of One Tower Hamlets to strengthen community leadership. All the recommendations from the review aim to strengthen community leadership and increase resident engagement in the democratic process. This will also improve community cohesion in the borough.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the Working Group's report or recommendations.