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| <p>Non Executive Decision of the: GPC</p> <p>25 February 2020</p> |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| <p>Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Strengthening Local Democracy – Councillor Support Framework</p> | |

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| Originating Officer(s) | Clare Matthews, Strategy and Policy Officer Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Policy |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | <p>Priority 3: A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough.</p> <p>Outcome 9: People say we are open and transparent putting residents at the heart of everything we do.</p> |

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the delivery of the council's Councillor Support Framework. It is the first performance update since the framework was approved by General Purposes Committee in June 2019.

Recommendations:

The GPC is recommended to:

1. Consider and comment on implementation of the Councillor Support Framework via the Performance Report attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This report follows the decision of the General Purposes Committee for the Corporate Director, Governance, to report back to the Committee on progress of the Councillor Support Framework every six months.

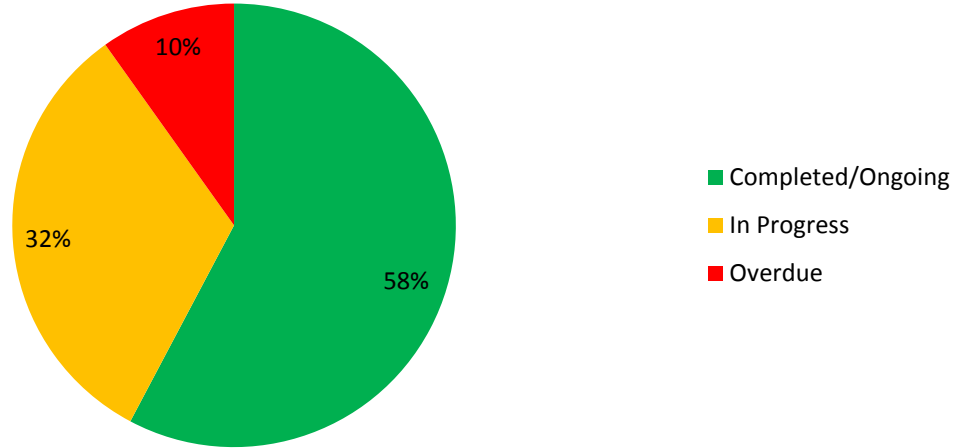
2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To do nothing. This is not recommended as the framework sets out a number of proposals to enable ward councillors to improve engagement at a local level. Reviewing performance will ensure these proposals are implemented.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Councillor Support Framework supports Ward Councillors with their broader engagement activities. This enables Councillors to play their role in the community beyond the Town Hall and ensure consistent support from officers. This work supports the Council's transparency, accountability, community engagement and cohesion priorities as outlined in the Strategic Plan, Tower Hamlets Plan and Transparency Protocol – A Transparent Mayor, an Open Council.
- 3.2 The framework was developed by the Strengthening Local Democracy task, and finish group and brought together the activities in place to support Councillors, alongside a series of proposals of what more could be done. The Councillor Support Framework was adopted by General Purposes Committee on 25 June 2019.
- 3.3 It was agreed by General Purposes Committee that the Corporate Director, Governance would retain oversight for the implementation of the framework and was to report back to the Committee on progress every six months. This is the first performance report on progress of the framework and covers the period up to January 2020.
- 3.4 Good progress has been made on implementing the Councillor Support Framework. The chart below shows the reported progress against the 78 actions in the framework. In order to ensure consistency in the reporting of the status of key milestones, the following criteria have been applied:
- **Completed** – where the key milestone has been achieved
 - **In Progress** – where the key milestone will be achieved by the deadlines
 - **Overdue** – where the key milestone has not been completed by the deadline date

Councillor Support Framework Overall progress



3.5 Highlights from the Performance Report (attached as Appendix 1).

| Completed | Ongoing | Delayed |
|---|---|---|
| Communications Plan around the Framework delivered | Members Hub and Bulletin are being developed and improved | Data Training for Members |
| Awareness raising at Senior Leadership Team meeting | Formal Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) is being developed | Mapping Member Enquiry 'hot topics' against wards |
| Ward Walkabouts piloted | Toolkit for Ward Councillors | Improving Councillor engagement with schools |
| Councillor involvement in Ward Panels has been promoted and encouraged | | |
| Joint scrutiny workshop to develop the work programme for each committee held | | |
| Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit revised | | |
| Consultation Handbook launched | | |
| Series of Scrutiny training sessions held | | |
| Wide ranging engagement on Local Infrastructure Fund held | | |
| National Democracy Week event held | | |
| Young Mayor Programme | | |

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals will support Ward Councillors enabling them to better engage with all sectors of their communities. This will have a positive equalities impact as existing and new arrangements are strengthened and improved.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on this update report on implementation of the Councillor Support Framework. The framework has been introduced to support ward councillors with their broader engagement activities and ensure consistent support from officers. The introduction of the framework is consistent with the general power of confidence contained in section 1(4)(c) of the Localism Act 2011. This enables the authority to do anything that individuals may do, including the power to do it for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

- Strengthening Local Democracy, report to General Purposes Committee, 25 June 2019

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Councillor Support Framework progress to January 2020

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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