

Committee <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	Date <b>8<sup>th</sup> March 2011</b>	Classification <b>Unrestricted</b>	Report No.	Agenda Item No. <b>9.1</b>
Report of: <b>Service Head, Democratic Services</b>		Title: <b>REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL MEETING: MAYOR'S OFFICE STAFFING PROPOSALS</b>		
Originating Officer(s): <b>John S. Williams</b>		Ward(s) affected: <b>All</b>		

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The agenda for the Council Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2010 included a written question from Councillor Anna Lynch to the Mayor, regarding the full year costs of setting up and staffing the Mayor's Office. Councillor Lynch's question and supplementary question, together with the Mayor's responses are set out overleaf.
- 1.2 Following a procedural motion moved by Councillor Bill Turner and seconded by Councillor Tim Archer under Council Procedure Rule 14.1.4 (motion to refer something to an appropriate body or individual), the Council agreed to refer the matters raised in Councillor Lynch's question to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on progress regarding the establishment of the Mayor's Office and further developments since the Council meeting, and invites the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether they wish to give consideration to this matter as part of the Committee's work programme.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee do not consider this matter at this time as the budget for the Mayor's office remains to be set by the Council

## 3. COUNCIL MEETING, 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2010

- 3.1 At the Council Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2010 a written question was submitted by Councillor Anna Lynch to the Mayor regarding the costs of setting up and

staffing the new Mayor's Office. The question was put at the meeting and is recorded in the minutes as follows:-

### **8.7 Question from Councillor Anna Lynch**

*"Can the Mayor tell me what is the estimated additional full year cost to the Council's budget of setting up and staffing his office?"*

#### **Response of the Mayor**

*"In May, our residents voted overwhelmingly for a Mayoral system. We are still drawing up detailed proposals, but I can tell you that already the number of calls and inquiries to the Mayor's office has gone through the roof.*

*It is hugely important that the Mayor's office can respond quickly and effectively to meet the aspirations of residents. I am determined to ensure that they get a good service and good value as well."*

#### **Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Anna Lynch**

*I asked you for a figure or an estimated figure. Given the notice of redundancies, can you commit to reducing the extra staff growth that has sprung up and if not, why not?*

#### **Summary of the Mayor's response**

*There is no secrecy. The figure that you have asked for will be provided but I do not walk around with it in my pocket.*

- 3.2 At this point in the Council meeting, Councillor Bill Turner moved and Councillor Tim Archer seconded that under Procedure Rule 14.1.4 (motion to refer something to an appropriate body or individual) the matters raised in Councillor Lynch's question be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.
- 3.3 The Committee is invited to decide, in the light of the points raised and the further information at section 4 below, whether it wishes to give consideration to the matters set out above and if so, any further information it requires and what form this consideration should take in the context of the Committee overall scrutiny work programme.

## **4. FURTHER INFORMATION: MAYOR'S OFFICE STAFFING PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The introduction in Tower Hamlets of an elected Mayoral form of executive gives rise to the need for a Mayor's Office to support the elected Mayor.

- 4.2 The proposed staffing structure for the Mayor's Office, building on the existing Executive Support Office, was included in the overall reorganisation proposals for Democratic and Members' Services which were launched for consultation with staff on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010. Consultation was due to end on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011 but was extended to 28<sup>th</sup> February in the light of initial comments received and continuing discussions around the Council's proposed budget.
- 4.3 At the Cabinet meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011, an amendment was agreed to the Mayor's initial budget proposals to:-
- Defer the proposed savings from the members' support team until June 30 2011;
  - Combine the budgets for the proposed Mayor's office and members' support into a single pot;
  - Allocate funding of £80,000 allocated to this pot to allow implementation of the full saving to be deferred to the end of the first quarter of 2011 (funded from contingencies released by a lower than expected overspend in 2010/11);
  - Combine the money currently allocated to member support and the Mayor's office in one pot; and
  - Assemble a cross-party working group to draw up proposals that ensure that both the Mayor and Members are adequately supported in their roles but the savings identified are achieved from this bigger pot.
- 4.4 The Mayor's budget proposals, revised as above, will be debated at the Budget Council Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 alongside any amendments proposed to the Budget in accordance with the Council's Budget Procedure Rules.

## **5. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The Mayor's office proposals are subject to the Council's Budget to be agreed at the Budget Council meeting. Should the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decide to undertake further scrutiny work on the matters set out in this report, this will have implications for the prioritisation of staff resources and member time within the scrutiny work programme.

## **6. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS FOR ONE TOWER HAMLETS**

7.1 The Democratic Services restructure and the Mayor's Office proposals aim to put in place suitable support arrangements for the Mayor and all Members to enable them effectively to represent all sections of the local community.

**8. ANTI POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no immediate anti-poverty implications arising from this report.

**9. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT (SAGE)**

9.1 There are no immediate SAGE implications arising from this report.

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)**

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

**Brief description of "background paper"**

**Name and telephone number of holder  
and address where open to inspection**

None

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