

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.33 P.M. ON MONDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2022**

**COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE  
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Musthak Ahmed (Chair)  
Councillor Abdul Mannan (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Maisha Begum (Member)  
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury (Member)  
Councillor Marc Francis (Member)  
Councillor Ahmodur Khan (Member)  
Councillor Sabina Khan (Member)  
Jahid Ahmed (Co-Optee)  
Halima Islam (Co-Optee)

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Kabir Hussain (Cabinet Member for Environment and  
the Climate Emergency)  
Councillor Maium Talukdar Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for  
Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning  
(Statutory Deputy Mayor)

**Officers Present:**

Susannah Beasley-Murray – (Divisional Director of Supporting Families)  
Kelly Duggan – HOS Youth Justice & Young People's Service •  
LBTH - Children's Services  
Sharon Godman – (Director, Strategy, Improvement and  
Transformation)  
Dan Jones – (Director, Public Realm)  
Daniel Kerr – (Strategy and Policy Manager)  
Luke Norbury – (Deputy Head of Youth Justice Service)  
David Tolley – (Head of Environmental Health and Trading  
Standards)  
David Knight – (Democratic Services Officer, Committees,  
Governance)

**1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND  
OTHER INTERESTS**

Nil items.

## 2. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

Item deferred.

## 3. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

## 4. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

The Committee **noted**:

1. The most recent editions of the Forward Plan.
2. The Forthcoming Decisions Plan (or 'Forward Plan') is published at least **28 days before each Cabinet meeting** setting out information on all the Key Decisions that are expected to be taken at that meeting, along with other Cabinet decisions where known.
3. Publication dates for future Forthcoming Decision Plans are available on the [Cabinet web pages](#). In advance of being published on the new Plan, individual notices of new Key Decisions will be published as they are known and these are listed as [New Issues](#).

## 5. BUDGET AND POLICY ITEMS

### 5.1 Youth Justice Annual Report

The Committee received a presentation on the Tower Hamlets and the City of London's Youth Justice plan that has been informed by the findings of the recent HMIP inspection that had taken place in April 2022. The plan it was noted aims to set out the approach on how the service and partnership will achieve the necessary improvements at pace to provide good outcomes for children. The Committee reviewed the presentation and the discussion is summarised below:

The Committee:

- ❖ **Understood** that the plan aims to set out the approach on how the service and partnership will achieve the necessary improvements at pace to provide good outcomes for children.
- ❖ **Noted** that the work of the service is governed by the Youth Justice Service Management Board (YJSMB). The key work of the YJSMB is to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Tower Hamlets and City of London.
- ❖ **Noted** that whereas across England and Wales, there has been a reduction in the number of first-time entrants (FTE) coming into the criminal justice system, LBTH although on track to reduce the FTE

numbers is behind other comparable areas. Hence it was **agreed** that the importance of (i) addressing numbers in custody numbers to reduce to zero and (ii) delivering a strong community offer.

- ❖ **Noted** that LBTH has a higher number of children entering the Criminal Justice System than the Councils statistical neighbours and across London. However, the number has reduced year-by-year in line with the current trend.
- ❖ **Noted** that (i) LBTH has looked into why Tower Hamlets has such higher numbers; (ii) it is clear that LBTH has not used the diversion schemes effectively. However, LBTH have reviewed and changed practice which is already making a difference and are working with the Police to explore how they can reduce this number further.
- ❖ **Noted** that LBTH have continue to reduce the number of children that are in custody. Which is due to the Councils continued investment into the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) offer.
- ❖ **Noted that from** October 2022, LBTH will also have the additional resource of the London Accommodation Resettlement Pathway, a residential unit in Newham.
- ❖ **Noted** that the main objective of this unit is to ensure that young people serving custodial sentences receive effective, end-to end service provision based on a thorough assessment of need and risk, in order to reintegrate them into the community. To do this, the following will need to be in place: **1.** case management which supports continuous service delivery throughout the resettlement process; **2.** delivery of appropriate interventions based on the individual need, risk of self-harm and harm to others of each young person; **3.** partnership working and the timely exchange of relevant information; and **4.** participation of young people and their families or carers in the resettlement process.
- ❖ **Agreed** on the on the importance of establishing and maintaining a dialogue with the families to pre-empt involvement of the police and other agencies.
- ❖ **Welcomed** that development of multi-agency work, with statutory and other partners/stakeholders **e.g.** Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Hackney YJS is the most effective way to meet all the needs of children and young people.
- ❖ **Agreed** that it is important to have the right level of intervention within the Youth Justice Service (YJS) to allow there to be better outcomes for children and young people, as well as help to prevent offending and reoffending whilst meeting the needs of victims, families, and the wider community.
- ❖ **Agreed** that whilst the reasons for disproportionality in youth justice are complex, and many lie outside of the criminal justice system. The youth justice system alone cannot solve the problem therefore LBTH and its partners have a responsibility to do everything they can to tackle disproportionality and to ensure that all children and young people are treated equally, no matter their background.
- ❖ **Noted** that the YJS has identified the performance gaps within the service to create a learning plan for staff and highlight performance issues that staff are dealing with on a daily basis, that might hinder operational frontline service delivery.

- ❖ **Acknowledged** that such a training needs analysis of the service which will make the training more efficient.
- ❖ **Agreed** on the importance of investment in the provision of such services and working in partnership with stakeholders
- ❖ **Noted** that the YJS has separated its board into Executive and Operational boards that allows there to be increased oversight of the priorities, strategic goals, and operational frontline service delivery.
- ❖ **Noted** that with regard to the fact that 83% of children being supported by the YJS are from black and minority ethnic communities, the YJS is constantly scrutinising the service delivery to ensure that children are receiving the same outcomes and the same service, regardless of their ethnic background.
- ❖ **Noted** that the Council is working with families **(i)** to develop their parenting skills; and **(ii)** support them in difficult situations.
- ❖ **Noted** that the Council has established a dialogue with community/religious community works to support families.
- ❖ **Whilst** accepting it needed to undertake careful scrutiny of the YJS it also **acknowledged** the excellent work being undertaken by the YJS especially the intensive supervision and surveillance programme (ISS) is the most rigorous non-custodial intervention available for young offenders. Which combines unprecedented levels of community-based surveillance with a comprehensive and sustained focus on tackling the factors that contribute to offending behaviour. The scheme targets the most active repeat young offenders and also those who commit the most serious crimes. The main aims of the programme being to **(i)** reduce the frequency and seriousness of offending in the target groups; **(ii)** tackle the underlying needs of offenders, with particular emphasis on education and training; and **(iii)** provide reassurance to communities through close surveillance backed up by rigorous enforcement.
- ❖ **Noted** that as part of ISS programme young people undertake a range of activities including reparative activities, restoring the costs of crime and reintegration back into the community. The aim of the programme is lasting change for young people and their families and reassurance to victims and the community. It provides very troubled young people with an opportunity to turn their lives around. A core part of the programme also focuses on education and training needs, allowing young people to develop their skills, and become more employable. Every young person has their own plan, tailored to tackle the root causes of their offending behaviour.
- ❖ **Agreed** that getting a buy-in from the staff who will make the Strategic Plan come to life is critical, the staff need to be supported and leaders need to work hard to retain staff who are the YJS greatest asset because the stability they create enables LBTH to develop strong relational youth work with children and families – rather than doing things for them or to them.
- ❖ **Noted** that **(i)** the staff really care about the children that their working with; **(ii)** the staff are stable group; **(iii)** the service leaders recognise that it is really important how they work with this group of staff.
- ❖ **Noted** that the Strategic Plans will be supported in part to the **(i)** staff's ability to engage children using restorative approaches and trauma

informed practice **(ii)** team of dedicated in-house specialists **(iii)** family group conferencing which is family-led meeting in which the family and friends network come together to make a plan for a child. The process is supported by an independent coordinator who helps the family prepare for the family group conferences. Children are usually involved in their own family group conference, often with support from an advocate; **(iv)** positive relationships with local Courts; **(v)** being in the wider Supporting Families directorate and the support that provides.

- ❖ **Noted** that the Management Board has responsibility for all aspects of YJS governance; to lead strategically across relevant partners and to ensure a high-quality service is provided to all children.
- ❖ **Noted** that the YJS has a strong image for the service and how it can deliver a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service to all children?
- ❖ **Agreed** that the YJS partnership arrangements need to actively support effective service delivery
- ❖ **Agreed** on the importance that the YJS can demonstrate that it works effectively to support desistance and positive outcomes for children?

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Councillor Maium Talukdar (Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)) Susannah Beasley-Murray (Divisional Director of Supporting Families) Kelly Duggan (HOS Youth Justice & Young People's Service Children's Services) Luke Norbury (Deputy Head of Youth Justice Service) and all attendees for a really helpful and informative discussion on the range of youth services that play a key role to support young people.

## 5.2 Gambling Policy 2022 - 2025

The Committee received report on the Councils Gambling Policy 2022- 2025 is going to Cabinet on 26th October 2022 , and includes details of the newly revised Gambling Policy. The Committee reviewed the report and the discussion is summarised below:

The Committee:

- ❖ **Noted** that as a Licensing Authority the Council must review the existing Gambling Policy and adopt a new policy in November 2022, as one of the responsibilities it has to regulate 'high street' premises under the Gambling Act 2005. The purpose of the policy is to define how the responsibilities under the Act are going to be exercised and administered.
- ❖ **Noted** that the Act requires Licensing Authorities to aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as it is in accordance with the regulatory framework (any codes of practice and Gambling Commission guidance) This means that the Council can only refuse an application that is not in accordance with the codes of practice and guidance and cannot for example ban gambling or specific forms of gambling.

- ❖ **Noted** that subject to agreement the Policy will be presented to Full Council for adoption under the provisions set out by the Council's Constitution.
- ❖ **Noted** that some of the major issues and concerns about gambling are not addressed in the policy or by the approach of the consultation **e.g.** gambling addiction, which is outside the remit of the consultation, as are arguments about the public benefits, or otherwise, of a more liberal gambling regime.
- ❖ **Understood** that all applicants and licence holder must promote the three licensing objectives. This Policy is written with the view to promoting the three licensing objectives of the 2005 Act. These objectives are to **(i)** prevent gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime; **(ii)** ensure that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way; and **(iii)** protect children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.
- ❖ Was **informed** that the Council does not have the powers within its Gambling Policy to regulate on-line gambling sites. All gambling websites trading with, or advertising to, consumers in Britain must have a Gambling Operators licence and a Remote Gambling Licence both issued by the Gambling Commission. Remote-Gambling is regulated by the Gambling Commission and Local Authorities do not hold any powers under the act in respect of Remote Gambling (**i.e.**, Online Gambling).
- ❖ **Noted** that the Government **(i)** has indicated that it wants there to be a gambling sector that is both vibrant and responsible; **(ii)** wants to make sure the industry is putting player protection and social responsibility at the heart of their businesses.
- ❖ **Agreed** that gambling is increasingly cited as a public health issue which requires a broad response; that is to say, traditional approaches that focus on single interventions do not tend to work at a population level. Harmful gambling is a complex problem with a large number of different but often interlinked factors - no single measure is likely to be effective on its own in addressing it. There are several ways in which the Council can try to support those individuals and families who are experiencing harm from gambling without taking on responsibility for treatment. This is in addition to their statutory licensing responsibility to try to prevent local gambling premises causing harm through gambling **e.g.** LBTH comes into contact with people impacted by problem gambling through a range of services, including housing and homelessness, financial inclusion, children's services, and addiction services. It is important that the Council has the data on where problem gambling has been a contributory or additional factor in these cases.
- ❖ **Agreed** that LBTH sends a clear signal that addressing problem gambling is a priority not just for public health and licensing but for the whole Council and its stakeholders, thereby facilitating cooperation across departments and with local communities and partners.
- ❖ **Noted** that the Council does not have the powers to refuse new applications unless doing so would undermine one or more of the licensing objectives. The requirement for operators to prepare local

risk assessments in relation to their premises also means that licensing authorities need to set out their expectations within their statements of Gambling Policy..

- ❖ **Noted** that most existing Adult Gaming Centres (AGC) are subject to planning conditions that control opening hours. If there are reported breaches of opening hours, the Planning Service will investigate and seek to ensure opening hours are complied with. Where there are persistent breaches, there are powers available under Section 187a of the Town and Country planning Act 1990, to serve a breach of condition notice (BCN). There is no right to appeal a BCN and failure to comply can lead to a prosecution through the Courts.
- ❖ **Noted** that online gambling websites have made it more accessible for people to gamble and, as a result, problem gambling is a major issue in England and Wales. There is no longer the need to visit a casino or betting shop to gamble – it can be done from anywhere and at any time.
- ❖ **Agreed** that the trouble with gambling online is that it can be kept secret. While a gambler would previously have had to visit a betting shop or casino, now it is possible to gamble while at work, on the bus, or in the home, and with more and more gambling sites creating smartphone apps, problem gamblers can access these sites no matter where they are.
- ❖ **Noted** that one of the biggest problems with online gambling is the fact that many of these sites offer ‘free to play’ versions of their games, where members can play with pretend money. When playing with pretend money, the odds will be typically in the player’s favour, and they will assume that they can then win with real money. However, once playing with real money, the odds will change and be in favour of the house.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked David Tolley, Head of Environmental Health, and Trading Standards and those in attendance for an informative discussion on the regulation of ‘high street’ premises under the Gambling Act 2005.

## 6. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

### 6.1 Waste and Recycling

The Committee received a presentation on Waste and Recycling Services performance (e.g. challenging existing customer service levels and proposing action to be taken to improve customer satisfaction and value for money), the discussion on the presentation maybe summarised below:

- ❖ **Noted** that the Waste and Recycling Service provides all schools with mixed dry recycling and food waste bins and a free weekly collection service. Additional recycling or food waste bins can be requested and advice and support is available to help improve recycling.
- ❖ **Noted** the Service has looked into incentivizing recycling, especially around schools as educating young people to become good recyclers is important for the long term.

- ❖ **Noted** that Tower Hamlets is the most densely populated borough in England with 15,695 residents per square kilometre. Across the borough the number of people living in flats is increasing, and nearly all new build properties are purpose-built flats. Therefore, there is a need to act to find new and better ways to support residents in flats to waste less and recycle more.
- ❖ **Noted** that recycling can be more difficult where there is no storage space for recycling bins, or where access for refuse vehicles is difficult. The Council needs to act now with nearly all new build properties in Tower Hamlets being flats.
- ❖ **Noted** that recycling contamination occurs when materials are sorted into the wrong recycling bin (placing a glass bottle into a mixed paper recycling bin for example), or when materials are not properly cleaned, such as when food residue remains on a plastic yogurt container.
- ❖ **Noted** the establishment of the Recycling Champions where anybody over 18 who lives in Tower Hamlets or works for a housing provider or community organisation in Tower Hamlets and is interested in improving recycling and reducing waste can be a part of the change to help to spread the word about reducing, reusing, and recycling in Tower Hamlets! By becoming a Recycling Champion these volunteers can make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood and help the environment..
- ❖ **Agreed** that recycling is a key part of the circular economy for reuse, reduce and recycle and bring about the following benefits including conserving natural resources, protects the ecosystems and wildlife, reduces demand for raw materials, saves energy, cuts climate change carbon emissions, creates jobs (green economy) and is cheaper than waste collection and disposal. It also helps the local authority to reduce its landfill costs and improve its contamination rates.
- ❖ **Commented** that the number of missed collections has not really changed much since the service was outsourced or insourced, so it has not necessarily got worse, but it has not necessarily improved in terms of missed collections.
- ❖ **Noted** that last year there had been mechanical breakdowns on the Underground Refuse System (URS) vehicles and it was not possible to get replacements for such specialist vehicles. However, LBTH now have four URS vehicles on the fleet and therefore the Waste and Recycling Service can have two operating at any one day one with two held in reserve. Consequently if there are any breakdowns, these two URS vehicles can be deployed quickly although there have not been any issues with the URS vehicles recently.
- ❖ **Asked** to be noted that they would like to see how LBTH measures its performance against other similar local authorities so as to discover if there is a gap in performance that can be closed by improving the Council's performance. It was felt that by studying other councils' performance it can highlight what it takes to enhance the Waste and Recycling Service efficiency.
- ❖ **Agreed** that recycling and being more sustainable is one of the best ways to positively impact the local environment **e.g.** waste is one of the main causes of the climate crisis and all local businesses; service



providers and the Council need to have effective and practical waste management solutions.

- ❖ **Agreed** that facilities management can benefit the Council by regularly revisiting programs for handling recyclable materials. Delivering these benefits means paying attention to the cost-effective management of a recycling program for properties within the LBTH portfolio **e.g.** stressing the quality of the material to be recycled. The marketplace for recycled materials is a buyer's market, and the single biggest element that will destroy the marketability of products is contamination. Therefore, the Waste and Recycling and Facilities Management Services will be working together on a scheme to handle recyclable materials.
- ❖ **Agreed** that good waste management is essential to protect the environment. As the Boroughs population grows, waste generation increases and if it is not properly addressed then this will not only cause environmental problems, but there is also the impact on people's health and quality of life.
- ❖ **Noted** that the Council has a zero tolerance approach with those who illegally dump waste because they think they can get away with it. Whether it's a business or an individual, it is unacceptable behaviour. Fly tipped waste is a blight on the Borough and it is ultimately residents who have to pay the price of the costly collection of dumped rubbish on the local streets. Therefore, when an incident is reported to Waste and Recycling Services it needs to be dealt with promptly.
- ❖ **Noted** that many residents have raised with the Committee Members that antisocial behaviour linked to the use of nitrous oxide, is a significant concern within their neighbourhoods. Therefore, the Council has introduced a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to tackle this issue and the Councils street cleaning teams are picking up discarded canisters from estates, parks, and streets.
- ❖ **Agreed** that Waste and Recycling Services needs to continue to work closely with residents to clean up specific areas of litter caused by the use of nitrous oxide.
- ❖ **Noted** that that Council has adopted the Reuse, Recycle and Waste Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that sets out guidance for developers on how waste management should be addressed in proposals for new residential and mixed-use development. The SPD covers the entire borough and aims to re-examine and improve the way in which waste is produced and managed.
- ❖ **Agreed** that given the fact that Tower Hamlets has the highest density of housing in London, and over the next ten years the population is projected to increase to 370,700 in 2028 requiring nearly 35,000 more homes in Tower Hamlets by 2028/29. These homes need to be built with better waste management systems to ensure that they provide a high level of amenity for occupants and minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill.
- ❖ **Noted** that the Service is looking at what is the most appropriate time and frequency of cleaning in the Borough, and it will not necessarily be the same in every area as more cleaning is needed in certain parts than others.

- ❖ **Noted** that changing the pattern of when waste and recycling is collected **e.g.** later in the night makes a massive difference and ends up helping the Service save money in the long term.
- ❖ **Noted** the issues with the way that the Council manages recycling and bulk waste as there are only a limited number of facilities available to process the waste and recycling that are a practical distance from the Borough.
- ❖ **Noted** that as LBTH gets high levels of contamination anybody who wants to manage recycling for the Council will build a factor of contamination into their price given to provide the service. Therefore it is important to get our contamination levels down by behaviour change and getting people to wash out pots and things like that and packaging and not put nappies and.
- ❖ **Noted** that changing the pattern of when waste and recycling (**e.g.** later in the night) will make a massive difference and helps save money in the long term.
- ❖ **Agreed** that elected members also have responsibility to ensure that they remind the residents about the risks of contamination and fostering a better behaviour culture towards recycling.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Councillor Kabir Hussain (Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency); Dan Jones (Director of Public Realm ); Fiona Heyland (Environmental Services Improvement Manager); Catherine Cooke (Environmental Services Improvement TL) and those in attending for a useful debate on the performance of the Waste and Recycling Services.

## 7. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

Following comments by the Committee it was **agreed** the particular questions (**See attached**) that they wanted to raise with Cabinet on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

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

Nil items.

## 9. UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

The Committee received and noted the updates that had been received from Scrutiny Leads in regard to their portfolio's.

## 10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

As the agenda circulated had no exempt/confidential reports and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration.

**11. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL) CABINET PAPERS**

Nil items.

**12. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

Nil items.

**13. MEETING CLOSED**

As there was no other business the Chair declared the meeting closed and reminded Members that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022, 6.30 p.m.

**The meeting ended at 8.27 p.m.**

**Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**