

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2011

**ROOM M71, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON,
E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Ann Jackson (Chair)
Councillor Rachael Saunders (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tim Archer
Councillor Stephanie Eaton
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Helal Uddin

Co-opted Members Present:

Canon Michael Ainsworth – (Church of England Diocese Representative)
Memory Kampiyawo – (Parent Governor Representative)
Jake Kemp – (Parent Governor Representative)
Mr Mushfique Uddin – (Muslim Community Representative)

Officers Present:

Sarah Barr – (Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer,
Strategy Policy and Performance, One Tower
Hamlets, Chief Executive's)
Antonella Burgio – (Democratic Services)
Anne Canning – (Service Head Learning & Achievement, Children
Schools & Families)
Isobel Cattermole – (Acting Corporate Director, Children, Schools &
Families)
David Galpin – (Head of Legal Services (Community), Legal
Services, Chief Executive's)
Michael Keating – (Service Head, One Tower Hamlets)
Ann Sutcliffe – (Service Head Building Strategic Property and
Capital Delivery, Development & Renewal)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Co-opted Member James Olanipekun and Councillor Amy Whitelock,

Cabinet Member, Councillor Oliur Rahman apologised that he was unable to attend at agenda item 6.2.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of personal or prejudicial interest were made.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2011 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items.

5. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

There were no decisions called in from the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th October 2011.

The Chair informed the Committee that on the 31st October, a Mayors executive decision had been published on the Council's website. The decision concerned the contract for the 2012 Olympic Festival Live site in Victoria Park. In accordance with Committee's request to be made aware of decisions taken under this provision, Members had been notified of the decision. The Chair advised that the decision was subject to call-in. The call-in period would expire on Monday, 7 November 2011 at 5.00 p.m.

6. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Raising Attainment - Successes and Challenges

A presentation was given by Isobel Cattermole, Acting Corporate Director Children Schools and Families, Anne Canning, Service Head Learning and Achievement and by Ann Sutcliffe, Service Head Building Strategic Property and Capital Delivery, Development & Renewal.

Prior to her presentation, the Acting Corporate Director commented on media coverage of national adoption performance and adoption statistics for councils in England and Wales. She informed the Committee that the Authority was confident in its adoption processes and advised that issues highlighted and details of the council's own adoption performance would be addressed via a members briefing to be circulated on Friday, 4 November.

The presentation comprised three elements; educational attainment, building schools for the future programme and discretionary educational grants.

In opening the Acting Corporate Director informed the Committee that the Government had made substantial changes to education policy since following the General Election 2010. Arising from these, three academies were due to be established in the borough (orders had been issued by the Secretary of State for Education) and the Secretary of State had granted permission for three free schools (one had already been opened, two more being expected to open in 2012). These new structures were funded directly by Government transfer and created a new type of relationship between the Council and schools. There would also be implications on funding available to the Council; therefore the Directorate had reviewed its trading arrangements with schools in order to make savings where there were unwanted services.

Concerning educational achievement, the Committee was informed that 2011 had seen the Borough's best performance at GCSE. There had been continued improvement at Key Stage One (KS1) and above average performance at Key Stage Two (KS2) in English and Maths. It was noted, however, that improvements at GCSE had not been mirrored post-16.

In her presentation, the Service Head Learning and Achievement highlighted the following:

- The Government was trying to reduce the range of data collected. It was not yet known what the parameters would be but it was anticipated that with the reduction there would be some loss of qualitative performance monitoring against some types of subject.
- The Government wanted to move the bar upwards and had introduced basic measures.
- Early Years, Foundation Stage and KS1 data showed good improvement. There had been Government support for early intervention and funding for an early learning pilot in the borough.
- At KS2, performance had been at around the national average for pupils achieving Level Four and above.
- There had been exceptional achievement at Key Stage Four (KS4) – GCSE. There had been an average increase of 10% from last year although some borough schools had achieved 20% improvement.
- There had been continued improvement year-on-year at KS4 which was attributed to Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and schools' leadership.

- There had been fewest changes in curriculum at Key Stage Five (A-Level) and attention was drawn to the national difficulties around apprenticeships. The borough had performed below the national average at A-Level although the results had been steady. To address this it was intended that the Council would implement strategies that had been used successfully at KS4 to raise attainment.
- The Council's aim was to improve performance at early years and post-16 stages.

The Service Head Building Strategic Property and Capital Delivery, Development & Renewal updated the Committee on the BSF programme, highlighting the following information:

- BSF was a capital investment programme initiated by the Government in 2006 to invest and transform education nationally. The programme had been discontinued following the change of Government in June 2010. However locally most of the programmes initiated would be unaffected by the removal of funding.
- By the end of the programme in 2015 the Council would have received significant investment in education to enable over 11,000 pupils to benefit from enhanced learning facilities.
- A progress update was given on the 20 local schemes.
- The primary capital program together with BSF would deliver 31 refurbished schools.
- The Committee was asked to note that the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places remained. The Acting Corporate Director challenged the Committee to consider how it could help Children Schools and Family Directorate to deliver its priorities. The Committee was also asked to consider how the Council's support for looked after children and post-16 improvements and continuing to meet the challenges of delivering education.

In response to Members questions the following information was provided:

- Latest data on children placed in prospective adoptive families would be circulated to the Committee

Action: Acting Corporate Director Children Schools and Families

- KS4 and KS5 OFSTED inspections were external inspections. In response to a suggestion from a Committee Member that KS5 performance might be improved if there were more teacher supervised revision, the Committee was informed that students no longer undertook independent revision (study leave).
- A report had been produced containing Directorate proposals on how the Council might be able to continue to offer discretionary education awards. This paper would be presented at Cabinet on 2nd November 2011. If approved, funding would be taken from reserves for one year.

- To determine how grants were distributed, the report proposed similar qualifying criteria as had been used for discretionary education grants in previous years. The Council's aim was to raise confidence to stay in education (previous grant uptake had been 65%).
- In regard to Members' concerns about a proposal to bring the management of children's centres in-house, the Acting Corporate Director confirmed that parents would be able to remain involved in the centres and was pleased to report that the centres continued to be used well. The Authority wished to engage with independent organisations to maintain open and transparent operation of the centres. It was the Director's responsibility was to address poor performance where it was evidenced; therefore robust service level agreements had been developed to ensure good performance.
- Children's centres were funded through the Early Intervention Grant.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted

6.2 Meeting Our Public Sector Equality Duty

Michael Keating, Service Head, One Tower Hamlets, gave a presentation updating the Committee of progress on equality matters. The Committee was informed that:

- The Equality Act 2010 simplified and strengthened preceding equality legislation; covered nine 'protected characteristics', introduced the public sector Equality Duty (applicable to all organisations that provide public services) and impacted all aspects of the Council's role as an employer, policy-maker, service provider, commissioner and procurer.
- One Tower Hamlets was an overarching principle of the Community Plan and underpinned all that the Council did by tackling inequalities strengthening cohesion and building community leadership using the single equality framework as a tool for delivery.

The priorities identified in 2010/11 for targeted action were women and worklessness and the transformation of adult social care. In 2011/12 the priorities are to consider the consequences of welfare reform and services for people with learning disabilities.

After the presentation, the following information was provided in response to Members' questions:

Although the Government had decided not to implement the socio-economic duty the Council would always need to ensure that tackling poverty was a key part of local equalities work given the nature of the community

Our work on embedding One Tower Hamlets is a central part of how we could demonstrate 'due regard' for the public sector Equality Duty

- We use the Equality Framework for Local Government to benchmark our performance but will explore this further as the single equality framework is developed

The previous scrutiny work undertaken by Councillor Ann Jackson, for example on tackling child poverty and using the Councillor Call for Action, had highlighted how development of the community leadership role of councillors would be crucial for delivering One Tower Hamlets. It will therefore be important for the Committee to continue to play a role in monitoring and evaluating work in this area.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

6.3 Scrutiny Review Tracking Report

Sarah Barr, Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer presented the report circulated at agenda item 6.3. This provided an update on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations made through its reviews dated from 2007-08 onwards.

The committee was asked to note the progress and to comment or query any matters. In discussion the Committee was provided with the following information:

- The reviews had been summarised, however detailed review recommendations were available to Members
- The Review of Early Intervention and Child Protection had identified targets that had not been met and these had been incorporated into the review recommendations.
- The targets identified by the review of child obesity were yet to be achieved and required approaches to be taken across directorates and across the Council's partners.
- Further to the challenge session on developing efficient customer services, Members asked that the chief officer give update on progress to date.

Action Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer

- It was noted that access to English for Speakers of Other Languages

provision impacted on other areas such as uptake of education and access to employment. It was felt that it would be beneficial to consider how work undertaken through the challenge session could be pursued.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

6.4 Covert investigation under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

The Head of Legal Services - Community provided Members with a quarterly update on the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). He reported that this power had been used on one occasion during each of the first and second quarters.

It was noted that the reduction in the Authority's RIPA usage had been queried by the Standards Committee and a further report would be presented to answer this matter.

In response to Members' questions, the following information was provided:

- Operation Creek activities had resulted in offences being uncovered and details of these would be provided in due course.
- The location of the Operation Frost investigation would be circulated to members.

Action: Head of Legal Services - Community

- Costings of surveillance exercises would be investigated and circulated to the Committee.

Action: Head of Legal Services - Community

- The Council was utilising investigatory powers to address matters where the Borough's communities had raised issues of concern but which might not otherwise be pursued by the Police.
- Decisions regarding who would undertake covert surveillance were made on the basis of the nature of the operation to be undertaken. Some decisions were taken as part of joint tasking operations, some because they formed part of the Council's community plan e.g. anti-touting surveillance, some surveillances were undertaken because these addressed matters on the Council's agenda such as community cohesion, crime and disorder objectives etc. In all cases the surveillance activity related to the Council's priorities. Councillor Uddin noted that it was important to ensure that Safer Neighbourhood Teams were being properly engaged in crime reduction and that this was also

a role for the Council.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

7. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

The following updates were provided by Lead Scrutiny Members:

Councillor Zenith Rahman had undertaken a number of visits in relation to her portfolio and had met with the Corporate Director Culture, Leisure and Communities.

Councillor Uddin was reviewing the impacts of the changes in housing benefits and was due to attend a budget session on 15th November.

Councillor Islam was to undertake a small review of asset management.

Councillor Rachael Saunders had identified a need to explore how the work of Overview and Scrutiny and the Health and Well-Being Board would compliment and contrast with each other. Verbal updates were given on budget driven changes in the personalisation agenda and the merger of 3 East London hospital trusts.

Councillor Amy Whitelock was continuing her investigations into children's centres.

Councillor Tim Archer was continuing his review of the cost of East End Life publication.

Councillor Ann Jackson was progressing her review of public consultation and engagement.

RESOLVED

That the verbal updates be noted.

8. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS

Nil items.

**9. ANY OTHER SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) BUSINESS WHICH THE
CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 9.16 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Ann Jackson
Overview & Scrutiny Committee