

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD ON TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2012 AT 7.00 P.M.

**ROOM C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Ann Jackson (Chair)
Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Tim Archer
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Amy Whitelock
Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Judith Gardiner
Councillor Tim Archer
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Amy Whitelock
Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Judith Gardiner

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Alibor Choudhury
Councillor Peter Golds

Co-opted Members Present:

Memory Kampiyawo – (Parent Governor Representative)
Canon Michael Ainsworth – (Church of England Diocese Representative)

Guests Present:

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Officers Present:

Sarah Barr – (Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer,
One Tower Hamlets, Chief Executive's)
Louise Russell – (Service Head Corporate Strategy and Equalities,
Chief Executive's)
Alan Finch – (Service Head Financial Services, Risk &
Accountability)
Chris Naylor – (Corporate Director Resources)

David Galpin	– (Head of Legal Services (Community), Legal Services, Chief Executive's)
Monica Forty	– (Acting Service Head, Early Years Children & Learning, Children's Services)
Vicky Allen	– (Strategy Policy & Performance Officer)
Simone Scott-Sawyer	– (Democratic Services)

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012-13

COUNCILLOR ANN JACKSON IN THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the new Municipal Year.

Councillor Amy Whitelock **MOVED** that Councillor Rachael Saunders be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee and this was **SECONDED** by Councillor Sirajul Islam.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Rachael Saunders be elected Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2012/2013.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th May 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

5. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

There were no requests.

6. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS

There were no requests.

7. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

There were none.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

8.1 Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference, Membership, Quorum, Dates of meetings, Protocols and Guidance

Ms Simone Scott-Sawyer, Senior Committee Officer, Democratic Services introduced the report and highlighted the main issues for Members to note as follows:

- Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules;
- Appendix 2 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Membership 2012/13;
- Appendix 3 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates 2012/13;
- Appendix 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Protocols and Guidance for conduct of business.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference, Membership, Quorum and meeting dates for the 2012/13 municipal year be noted, and that the protocols and guidance be adopted.

8.2 Appointment of Scrutiny Lead Members, Co-options to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Health Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference and Appointments

Ms Simone Scott-Sawyer, Senior Committee Officer, Democratic Services introduced the report.

The Committee was asked to agree the co-option of representatives in respect of education matters and the Tower Hamlets Local Involvement Network in accordance with the statutory requirements and the Council's Constitution.

The report further advised Members of the establishment of the Health Scrutiny Panel by full Council, and the need to make appointments to this Panel and appoint a Chair.

Councillor Peter Golds who was in attendance, spoke of his wish to continue attending Health Scrutiny Panel meetings as an observer, and requested through the Chair, that this arrangement continue. Councillor Rachael Saunders, Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel stated that she was happy for this to continue.

RESOLVED

1. That the Scrutiny Lead Portfolios based on the Council's Directorates Plan be agreed and the following Scrutiny Lead Members be appointed as follows:-

Adults, Health & Wellbeing – Councillor Rachael Saunders;
Chief Executive's – Councillor Tim Archer;
Development & Renewal – Councillor Sirajul Islam;
Children, Schools & Families – Councillor Amy Whitelock;
Resources – Councillor Helal Uddin;
Communities, Localities & Culture – Councillor Judith Gardiner.

2. That the co-option of representatives in respect of education matters as detailed in the report be agreed;
3. That the establishment of the Health Scrutiny Panel and the appointment of Members thereto as detailed below be noted:

Councillor Rachael Saunders [Chair]
Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Lesley Pavitt
Councillor Md. Abdul Mukit, MBE
Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Dr Emma Jones
Councillor Gulam Robbani

4. That the co-option of David Burbridge and Amjad Rahi from the Tower Hamlets Local Involvement Network to the membership of the Health Scrutiny Panel be agreed.

9. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1 Strategic Performance and Corporate Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring - 2011/12 Outturn

The Chair welcomed Councillor Alibor Choudhury, who was in attendance with Chris Naylor, Corporate Director, Resources. Cllr Choudhury introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

Members made the following observations:

- Councillor Islam requested more information on how many new houses were social housing;
- Councillor Whitelock commended Children, Schools & Families for meeting nearly all of their targets. However, with reference to the data provided on page 65, there were no comparisons made and it was therefore hard to place the information into context;
- Councillor Uddin wished to know what had been achieved thus far with regards to the Work Programme;

- Councillor Gardiner was apprehensive about street cleanliness performance as it did not equate to the residents' experience. Clarification was sought on the quarter 3 recycling figures and the 'near entry' collections system.

The Chair noted the following points:

- The Council Tax, Housing Benefits and "Building Schools for the Future" teams appeared to be meeting their targets despite teams being impacted by significant budget cuts and welfare reform;
- The Pensions fund deficit appeared to be decreasing;
- A separate briefing on welfare reform and the projected impact was also requested.

In response to some Members' questions and comments, Chris Naylor made the following points:

- The provision of affordable housing had been a clear priority of the Mayor and resources had been set aside specifically for this purpose;
- The welfare reforms had not kicked in as yet and were therefore unlikely to have an impact on the current data. However this was a financial risk for the future;
- With regards to the Pension fund, this was largely affected by the stock market and returns. Once an evaluation of the performance of the fund had been carried out by the actuaries, Members would be able to get a clearer picture;
- Appendix 5 – this set out the amount that the individual directorates were carrying forward. Some monies had been withheld for IT spend which resulted in a £1m saving.

In response to some Members' questions, Louise Russell, Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality stated that with reference to employment, the Department for Work and Pensions have now agreed to share data on the Work Programme with local authorities.

Councillor Alibor Choudhury made the following remarks in response to some Members' comments:

- With regards to the outcomes for carers, he stated that he was happy to look further into this and report back to the Committee;
- The Right to Buy scheme will impact on the budget and some work was currently being done to address this issue;
- Officers were working with local employers to find more ways for local people to access jobs in the City and Canary Wharf.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9.2 Reviewing the impact of the Children's Centres restructure - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group

The Chair invited Councillor Amy Whitelock, Scrutiny Lead, Children, Schools and Families [CSF] to introduce the report. Councillor Whitelock pointed out that the review was borne out of concern from parents about the restructure of the Children's Centres because of a reduction in budget. She commended officers for all their hard work and special thanks were extended to Vicky Allen, Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer and Monica Forty, Head of Achievement, Birth – 11, Learning and Achievement Service. She highlighted the following points:

- The service user feedback mechanism yielded good results;
- Members of staff were doing a great job despite the reduction in the layers of management which inevitably had a knock on effect as there was pressure on more junior staff;
- Building capacity within the new structure was needed to ensure that the service was more resilient;
- It was worth noting that Children's Centre staff felt that the review process, despite the challenges, had been handled very well.

Members made the following observations:

Councillor Helal Uddin spoke of his wish for the Monitoring and Performance Steering Group to ensure that the children's services perform at the same level as before. He added that it was important that communication was maintained with the community to ensure that they moved forward.

In response to a question by the Chair about what lessons had been learned from the restructure's consultation process which might help when facing the 'Youth Service delivery' restructure, Monica Forty commented as follows:

- This was the largest re-structure to take place in the CSF department, losing a quarter of the budget;
- The aim was to protect lower grade members of staff;
- Although a leaner service, the restructure had enabled the service to become more streamlined and consistent within the borough. However there was still commissioning of specialist services which ensured that the service can meet specific needs within different community areas;
- Participation – this was encouraged at community and locality level to keep parents involved;
- No compulsory redundancies were made to members of staff in the Children's Centres as a result of the restructure;
- The services provided by the legal team were to be commended especially with regards to their assistance in the transfer of undertaking and protection of employment matters.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9.3 Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracking Report: Update

Sarah Barr, Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer, introduced the report and informed Members that they were at liberty to write in requesting additional information should they need it. She informed Members that this would be the last tracking report done in this format, and a new process for monitoring reviews would be introduced.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Annual Review 2011-12

Sarah Barr, Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer stated that the review, although shorter this year, aimed to capture all the salient events of 2011/12. She noted that call-ins had doubled from 5 last year, to 10 this year.

The Chair felt that despite the challenges of the previous municipal year, it had been very constructive and she thanked all officers involved in making scrutiny of the Council a success. She hoped for a more constructive relationship with the Mayor in the new municipal year.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

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

Health Scrutiny matters

The Chair tabled a document for Members, relating to the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was agreed that the Chair would seek a meeting with the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board to discuss a suitable way forward.

OSC Members' workshop

Sarah Barr reminded Members that the OSC workshop was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 27th June at 6 pm, on the 8th floor, Anchorage House.

The meeting ended at 9 p.m.

Chair – **Councillor Ann Jackson**
Overview & Scrutiny Committee