

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 7.25 P.M. ON MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016**

**MILE END ECOLOGY PAVILION, HAVERFIELD ROAD, OFF GROVE ROAD, LONDON  
E3 5TW**

**Members Present:**

Councillor John Pierce (Chair)	
Councillor Danny Hassell (Vice-Chair)	
Councillor Amina Ali	– Scrutiny Lead for Adult Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Peter Golds	– Scrutiny Lead for Law, Probity and Governance
Councillor Denise Jones	– Scrutiny Lead for Communities, Localities & Culture
Councillor Md. Maium Miah	– Scrutiny Lead for Resources
Councillor Oliur Rahman	–
Councillor Helal Uddin	– Scrutiny Lead for Development and Renewal
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim	

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Nozrul Mustafa	– (Parent Governor Representative)
Victoria Ekubia	– (Roman Catholic Church Representative)
Dr Phillip Rice	– (Church of England Representative)
Rev James Olanipekun	– (Parent Governor Representative)

**Apologies:**

Councillor Mahbub Alam

**Officers Present:**

Hania Franek	– (Head of School Governance & Information, Children's Services)
Mark Cairns	– (Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer)
Shazia Ghani	– (Head of Community Safety)
Kevin Kewin	– (Interim Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality)

Adele Maher	– (Strategic Planning Manager, Development and Renewal)
Steve Grocott	– (Head of Careers Service, Children's Services)
Kathryn Robinson	– (Head of Legal Operations)
Tim Williams	– (Post 16 Development Officer, Children's Services)
David Knight	– (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mahbub Alam.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

**3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

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

**RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 be approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

**4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

Nil items

**5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

Nil items

**6. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT**

Nil items

**7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**7.1 New Local Plan: First Steps**

The Committee received a report that outlined the scope, process and timescales for the new Local Plan. The main points of the discussion may be summarised as follows:

The Committee:

1. Heard that whilst LBTH has a responsibility to ensure that it follows national guidelines every effort is made to reach out to all the local communities and to ensure that developments will benefit local residents;

2. Indicated it wanted more information on what is being done to develop tourism; protect heritage sites within Tower Hamlets and to improve the rates of recycling;
3. Wanted to know what can be done to restrict the expansion of betting shops and pay day lenders in the Boroughs various town centres;
4. Wanted to see more explicit reference in the Plan as to what is being done in terms of the health and wellbeing of the Borough (Including the provision of affordable housing for key workers (**e.g.** medical professionals));
5. Wanted to see more details on be engagement with the various communities in the Borough;
6. Indicated that LBTH does not have properly designated town centres and that this should be addressed in the Plan;
7. Wanted to see details of those assets in LBTH are considered to be of community value **e.g.** the older and more established public houses.
8. Noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting addressing the transport infrastructure requirements of the Borough;
9. Heard that LBTH is working with Transport for London (TfL) on the development of the Boroughs transport infrastructure; and
10. Noted that through the Local Plan LBTH can secure community facilities as part of the infrastructure and address the provision of “play space”.

**Action By:** Adele Maher (Strategic Planning Manager, Development and Renewal)

## 7.2 Community Safety Plan Extension

The Committee received a report regarding the extension of the Boroughs Community Safety Partnership. It was noted that the Council must adopt a Community Safety Partnership Plan in order to meet statutory requirements set by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). The priorities and governance structure outlined in the Plan are based on the statutory strategic assessment exercise that has been carried out by statutory partners to consider data on safety in the Borough. These have been agreed by the Community Safety Partnership in July 2015 to be the best model to deliver a safer and more cohesive community in Tower Hamlets. Accordingly, the Cabinet will be asked to consider the reviewed Plan, along with the CSP decision to extend it by one year in order to remain aligned with MOPAC's Police and Crime Plan 2013-16. A summary of the discussions on this report is outlines as follows:

The Committee:

1. Heard what is being done to address prolific offenders and to work with their families to build constructive lives and to break the cycle of violence;
2. Heard that Safer Neighbourhood Teams work to address of a range of issues with partner agencies and local residents;
3. Heard that with regards to domestic violence and violence against women and girls that there is concern that many victims suffer in silence and that they need to be encouraged to come forward;
4. Heard that the Council are looking at increasing the numbers of third-party reporting sites and preventative work **e.g.** more should be encouraged to come forward to report any incidences of Islamophobia and that the Prevent agenda is being addressed in a holistic fashion that encompasses the whole family;
5. Heard that the Council are working with both the local schools; community groups and partner agencies to address hate crime at an early stage;

6. Heard what is being done to address Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in a truly sensitive fashion to ensure that people know where they go to get help and that agencies have the relevant training in place for their staff.
7. Heard what is being done to address the radicalisation of local residents in a manner that does not isolate communities or potentially criminalising individuals within those communities.
8. Wanted to see as part of any refresh of Safer Neighbourhood Panels (SNP) how they can be involved in responding to issues such as radicalisation and FGM;
9. Wanted to see how actions arising from "Ward Walks" are being addressed;

**Action By:** Shazia Ghani (Head of Community Safety)

### 7.3 Recruiting more diverse school governors

The Committee received a report that considered the composition of governing boards of maintained schools in Tower Hamlets, whether governors reflect the diverse nature of the borough and if not, whether and how the composition of governing boards can be influenced. The main points of the discussion are outlined below:

The Committee:

- Heard that governing boards are comprised of the following categories of governors, who are appointed for four years unless the governing board decides on a shorter term of office:
  - I. Parent governors who are elected by other parents at the school;
  - II. Staff governors who are elected by the school staff and can be teaching or support staff;
  - III. The Headteacher is a member of the governing board by virtue of his/her office;
  - IV. Local authority governors are nominated by the local authority and appointed by the governing board;
  - V. Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing board; and
  - VI. Foundation and Trust governors are required at foundation and voluntary aided and controlled schools and are appointed by Foundations and church/religious bodies.
- Heard that there is very significant over-representation of governors who are White British and significant under-representation of governors from other ethnic groups, particularly Bangladeshi governors;
- Heard that many governors are not residents of Tower Hamlets and unless they are elected, ex officio or foundation governors, they are appointed by the governing board for their skills;
- Noted that the local authority has little scope to influence the appointments to governing boards as the decisions are overwhelmingly the remit of governors themselves or the appointing bodies for voluntary schools;
- Wanted to have details on the representation of support staff on governing bodies;
- Expressed their concern that the under representation of governors from the black minority and ethnic communities meant that some governing bodies do not reflect the community that they seek to serve;

- Expressed the view there are many individuals in the local community with the ability to make a useful contribution to governing bodies;
- Was informed that governing bodies can appoint individuals who can provide constructive support and challenge and act as a critical friend an issue which Ofsted is mindful of;
- Heard that governing bodies often ask for local authority governors to be reappointed so as to maintain the required skills and knowledge;
- Asked for more information on how individuals can become governors and that they wished to see people from the wider community being encouraged to come forward to become the school governors;
- Felt that there was a need to look at how contact is made with local communities to promote increased participation in governing bodies;
- Asked to be provided with more details on those schools that had vacancies on their governing bodies; and
- Felt that there are people in the community who have the skills that can be used to address any imbalance in governing bodies. Also that there are many third sector organisations who are well placed to assist in addressing any imbalance.

**Action By:** Hania Franek - (Head of School Governance & Information, Children's Services)

#### **7.4 Progress update: review on improving post-16 educational attainment**

The Committee received a report that followed up from the scrutiny review into post-16 educational attainment. The review had taken place in June, 2013. Post-16 educational attainment had been chosen as a priority issue for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2013-14 because of evidence that many young people in Tower Hamlets were not achieving their full potential at this level. Raising attainment at post-16 being a priority for the then Mayor and the Education Social Care and Wellbeing Directorate (now Children's Services) and it was felt strongly that a scrutiny review could make a valuable contribution to the work on this agenda.

It was noted that the key aim of the review was to explore why post-16 results (AS and A2 Levels) are below average, particularly when considered against performance at GCSE. The review group also sought to understand the barriers which prevented better attainment, and ultimately how the council and its partners could further support schools and young people to increase overall performance at this level. Also, the review group was keen to look at participation in higher education, and young people's aspirations for employment, as one of the factors which influences their post-16 choices and attainment.

It was noted that the report had made 16 recommendations around four central themes, which were agreed by OSC and by Cabinet:

- Supporting the transition to post-16;
- Independent information and advice;
- Teaching quality; and
- Parental engagement

The body of the report outlined the progress against these recommendations. The original report with recommendations and the action plan in Appendix 1 which accompanied the report. The discussion on the report may be summarised as follows.

The Committee:

- Wished to know how LBTH are helping young people to secure employment (e.g. developing the necessary life skills and the choosing the most appropriate courses for their career development);
- Heard that whilst many students' families will accept their children going to prestigious London universities they are less enthusiastic about their children attending universities outside London. In addition, there are the practical implications regarding the costs involved in living away from home. Therefore, many of the Boroughs young people decide to attend universities in London and to remain at home with their parents.
- Wanted to know what is being done in LBTH to address the gender gap in literacy

**Action By:** Tim Williams (Post 16 Development Officer, Education Social Care and Wellbeing)

## 7.5 Reporting use of covert surveillance

Received and noted a report that summarised the Council's use of those powers and other activities in relation to Part 2 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ("RIPA").

It was noted that one application had been made for a RIPA authorisation in the second quarter of 2015/2016 (under Unique Reference Number 15/16 –CS -005) by the Trading Standards Service. This was authorised on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and Judicial Approval was obtained on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

The subsequent observations using CCTV and officers' observations gathered evidence of a network of street traders and business premises in Whitechapel involved in the supply of illicit tobacco. The observations coupled with Trading Standards investigations provided information towards getting entry warrants under Schedule 5 to the Consumer Rights Act 2015. As a result Stratford Magistrates Court issued five entry warrants. The warrants were executed pm 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015, with the following results:

- Illicit cigarettes - 738 packets, 18,960 cigarettes.
- Illicit shisha – 78 packets;
- HRT – 12350 (12.35kg);
- Chewing tobacco not carrying appropriate warnings – 3186

A large quantity of cash was also discovered by Trading Standards staff along with gold bars which were seized by the Police under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

**Action By:** Kathryn Robinson (Head of Legal Operations)

## 8. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

The Committee noted that:

- Councillor Ali will be chairing the health scrutiny panel on Wednesday that is to consider the review of maternity services;
- Councillor Jones indicated that a report on the recycling will be available shortly; and
- Councillor Hassell is to meet with officers to look at the provision for those female students with social and emotional needs.

In addition, Councillor Pierce informed the Committee that the review of the Prevent agenda would commence the end of the month

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

### **Item 5.7 - Community Safety Partnership Plan Review and Extension.**

The following question was raised regarding Prevent and FGM in the context that the Committee was concerned that teachers especially but also other professionals were intervening and referring on when this might not be the most appropriate or necessary course of action:

How does the Council and its partners ensure that not only are the thresholds are in place but all partners agencies at different levels of staff - especially front line - know what these are.

**Subsequent to the meeting the following response was received.**

#### **Prevent:**

The delivery of Prevent is led through Children's Services and the Community Safety team. There are key posts funded in place to support the delivery of Prevent through training and workshops that are delivered to a host of organisations and individuals. We have an Education Officer who delivers WRAP (Workshop Raising Awareness of Prevent) training and support across the primary and secondary schools in Tower Hamlets to teaching and school staff. There is also training and support in place for parents and families through the parental engagement team.

Further training is delivered by the Prevent Engagement Officer in the Community Safety team. This has included to leads and frontline workers in the CCG, RSLs, Foster Care Team, Voluntary Sector, Youth Services, London Probation, Unite, Pest Control and LBTH Community Language Team. 520 individuals have been trained from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. Further training is being tailored and scheduled for social workers across Learning Disabilities and Older Persons Services. Presentations on Prevent including referral pathways have been delivered including at the Children's Safeguarding Board. This is a multi-agency board attended by leads across partner agencies including schools, colleges, health, police, voluntary sector representatives and adults and children's social care. The Prevent Board is the strategic board which meets quarterly to ensure the strategic vision for Prevent and Safeguarding is embedded and understood within each organisation

and communicated to teams. Feedback from training sessions are a guide to understanding and also help team to support further training. The Board is a sub group of the Community Safety Partnership and therefore reports back on activity and challenges each quarter.

Along with the training and support, referrals are managed through the Social Inclusion Panel and Safeguarding Adults Panel. The panels are attended as appropriate across Children's and Community Safety, Police, Safeguarding leads, Health and as appropriate case workers and intervention providers pertinent to cases. This ensures all cases are discussed in a partnership and holistic way with support plans which safeguard individuals, families and communities.

**FGM:**

Tower Hamlets has a multi-pronged approach to addressing FGM and supporting professionals to respond appropriately. FGM is one of 10 priority areas within our Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Plan and will continue to be in our new strategy which is currently going through consultation. We have direct action plans for FGM, including working with other North East boroughs for a multi-agency response to FGM. We are working on a 2 year pilot with MOPAC around wider harmful practices (including FGM, forced marriage, so-called 'honour' based violence and faith-based abuse) and part of that is a one year element funded by the DfE focussing explicitly on FGM. We have a FGM social worker who is based in the specialist team at the Royal London Hospital. Cases that are referred to MASH/IPST come directly to her for assessment. She works directly with other services, including our peer advocates to support families around FGM and to provide support to other colleagues within children's social care. We have 2 advocates who provide capacity building support to professionals to deal with all cases of harmful practices by ensuring that they are appropriately supported and skilled up to respond to FGM. We provide training through a number of mechanisms for professionals around FGM: VAWG champions, VAWG multi-agency training and PEHP (Partnership for Ending Harmful Practices) training. Over the last two years, we have trained 150 VAWG champions on how to refer to all forms of violence; 206 other professionals on FGM specifically and 389 school staff (including teachers, child protection leads etc.) on FGM as well as over 200 students.

Teachers have a mandatory duty to report FGM since October 2015 where a young person has disclosed to them and information from the Home Office and DfE is available [here](#)

**10. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

Nil items

**11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The agenda circulated contained no exempt/ confidential business and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration.

**12. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

Nil items

**13. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

Nil items

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

Nil items

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

Nil items

The meeting ended at 10.15 p.m.

Chair, Councillor John Pierce  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee