


Cabinet 26 September 2018	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Will Tuckley, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
OSC Brexit Challenge Session – Report containing the Action Plan of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Challenge session held on 7th of December 2017.	

Lead Members	Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit
Originating Officer(s)	Shibbir Ahmed – Corporate Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	Not required
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Tower Hamlets Plan Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, resilient and safe communities • Good jobs and employment

Executive Summary

This report contains the Action Plan based on the recommendations of the Scrutiny Challenge session held on 7th of December 2017 and its link with the work of the Brexit Commission that was officially announced at the 25th July 2018 Cabinet meeting.

The majority of these actions will form part of the Brexit Commissions work and will be delivered by end of the municipal year 2018-19.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. To consider and agree the Action Plan document.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council's constitution requires the Executive to respond to recommendations from the OSC. The action plan within this report outlines the Executive response to the recommendations arising from the Challenge Session.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet may decide not to agree the Action Plan. This is not recommended as the report outlines work that will be undertaken by the Brexit Commission to better understand the impact of different scenarios on the borough's economy, civil society and public services and the actions that the Council and Partners will take

to manage key risks and to ensure appropriate preparedness.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Background to the development of the Scrutiny Action Plan:

- 3.1 As part of his work programme for 2017/18, the Scrutiny Lead for Governance, Councillor Ayas Miah undertook a Scrutiny Challenge Session (held on 7th of December 2017) focused on the potential impact of Brexit on the Council. There were a total of 10 recommendations that were agreed at the Challenge Session. **See attached Appendix 1.**
- 3.2 This report submits the draft Action Plan based on these 10 recommendations which needs to be formally approved by Cabinet in order to for officers to complete and implement the recommendations in a timely and efficient manner. **See attached Appendix 2.**
- 3.3 The Challenge Session offered the opportunity to begin exploratory discussions on the Council's resilience planning and to recommend key priorities for mitigation planning. Due to uncertainty around the UK government's ongoing Brexit negotiations, the time available for this meant that its scope was limited to an initial assessment of corporate risks and opportunities facing the authority as an organisation.
- 3.4 Therefore, one of the key recommendations was for the 2018/19 Overview & Scrutiny Committee to continue the Brexit Scrutiny work into the new municipal year and provide officers with sufficient information to allow them to organise a full Brexit Scrutiny Review to obtain further assessment of the progress of Brexit and consider its implications for the Council, Partners and our wider community.

The Scrutiny Action Plan link to the Brexit Commission work:

- 3.5 The election manifesto of Executive Mayor John Biggs committed to establishing a Commission that would examine the impacts that Brexit will have on the Council, local economy and our residents, and to ensure that we can take action to minimise these impacts.
- 3.6 This in effect implemented the key recommendation of the Brexit Scrutiny report and it was agreed that majority of the Scrutiny actions will be subsumed and will form part of the Tower Hamlets Brexit Commissions work programme.
- 3.7 Although OSC will not be leading this work, however the new Scrutiny Lead for Governance (Cllr Mohammed Pappu) has been appointed as a Commissioner for the Brexit Commission. He will work closely with the Chair of the Brexit Commission to ensure that the key recommendations of the Brexit Challenge Session are incorporated into the Brexit Commissions work and each of the Scrutiny actions are completed and implemented in a timely and efficient manner.
- 3.8 At the 25th July 2018 Cabinet meeting it was agreed that the Tower Hamlets Brexit Commission would be chaired by Cllr Amina Ali (Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit).

- 3.9 The Brexit Commission would examine the impact of Brexit and obtain detailed assessment to better understand the impact of different scenarios on the borough's economy, civil society, public services and the boroughs' residents. It will also look to develop high level contingency plans to manage key risks and to ensure appropriate preparedness.
- 3.10 The Commission will focus on three broad areas; local economy, civil society and public services. Evidence gathering will be conducted through Select Committee style hearings, with three themed meetings for oral evidence from invited guests that will take place between September and late October 2018. These oral hearings will be supplemented with an open submission for written evidence for local residents and organisations. There will also be 'Brexit Roadshow' advice sessions for EU27 residents to obtain information about the settled status/pre-settled status process in mid-September. The findings and recommendations of the Commission will be written up into a final report, to be launched at the beginning of 2019.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The OSC Brexit Action Plan includes ways to promote diversity and community cohesion as well as consider appropriate and specific support that could be offered to EU migrants and residents and consider potential impact on different equalities groups and how the borough can mitigate these impacts.
- 4.2 The Brexit Commission will consider potential and specific impact of Brexit on all the protected equalities groups and how the borough can work together to mitigate against any adverse impacts. These include protecting and promoting:
- Women's rights: including, maternity and parental leave;
 - Disability rights: including improved employment opportunities and protections at work;
 - Tackling workplace discrimination: including protection on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.
- 4.3 The Brexit Commission will look to explore ways to promote diversity and community cohesion as well as consider appropriate and specific support that could be offered to EU migrants so that all our residents feel reassured and can live, work and study in the borough free from discrimination.
- 4.4 The Brexit Commission will also try to collectively lobby central government to ensure equality and key worker rights continue to be treated as priorities and setting a progressive agenda for post-Brexit Britain.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct statutory implications in terms of Best Value and Risks but they have been considered broadly in drafting the terms of reference, scope and timetable of the Brexit Commission.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report details the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Challenge session held on the 7th of December 2017 to consider the potential impact of Brexit on Tower Hamlets Council.
- 6.2 There are 10 specific recommendations being put forward for Cabinet consideration. It should be possible to deliver a number of these recommendations through existing resources. However, where this is not possible officers will be obliged to seek appropriate approval through the Council's financial approval process.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants. The Committee may also make reports and recommendations to Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions.
- 7.2 The Challenge Session looked at the potential impact of Brexit on the Council and to obtain an overview of the Council's understanding of the likely impact of Brexit on the organisation. It was also to begin exploratory discussions on the Council's resilience planning for the organisation and to recommend key priorities for mitigation planning going forward. In that regard, 10 recommendations have been proposed and all are capable of being undertaken within the Council's powers.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – OSC Brexit Challenge Session Report (including Recommendations)
- Appendix 2 – Brexit Challenge Session – Action Plan (Updated)

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

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