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| <p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p>Monday, 16 December 2019</p>               |  <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p> |
| <p><b>Report of:</b> Sharon Godman, Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance</p>                                      | <p><b>Classification:</b><br/>Open (Unrestricted)</p>   |
| <p><b>Challenge Session Report - Working in genuine partnership with seldom-heard residents to make our communities safer</b></p> |   |

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| <p><b>Originating Officer(s)</b></p> | <p><b>Afazul Hoque</b>, Head of Corporate Strategy &amp; Policy<br/><b>Daniel Kerr</b>, Strategy and Policy Manager, Corporate<br/><b>Filuck Miah</b>, Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate</p> |
| <p><b>Wards affected</b></p>         | <p>All Wards</p>  |

## Executive Summary

This paper submits the report and recommendations of the Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Lead's review of 'ward panels engagement with seldom heard groups' for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the report and agree the recommendations identified (by the Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety) within the report

## 1. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety identified the effectiveness of ward panels' engagement with hard to reach and seldom heard groups as the subject for a scrutiny challenge session.
- 1.2. The session aimed to ensure that we hear and learn from first hand experiences of seldom-heard residents and identify key barriers to their engagement to ensure better participation in safer neighbourhood ward panels. Their feedback is captured in the report.

- 1.3. Ward panels in Tower Hamlets should play an important role in community policing. There are currently 20 ward panels and one Safer Neighbourhood Board in Tower Hamlets. The set-up of ward panels consists of an elected chairperson (elected by resident ward panel members), local residents, housing providers, community groups and Local (ASB) managers, as well as ward councillors. The evidence in the report highlights the need for further work to better engage seldom heard groups in community safety issues. This includes tackling low resident engagement with ward panels, low awareness of the Online Watch Link (OWL) system, low awareness of enforcement activities and community improvements, and resident's perception of feeling unsafe (as detailed in the annual resident survey).
- 1.4. The report makes a number of practical recommendations for key stakeholder partners to take on board and put into action. These will improve the engagement and participation of seldom heard residents on community safety concerns.
- 1.5. The report makes 11 recommendations:
  - Tower Hamlets ward panels to develop and recruit to vice chair roles, focussed on building representative participation.
  - MOPAC (Mayor's Office for Police and Crime) to incentivise learning and development opportunities for ward panel vice chairs e.g. how to promote inclusion and engagement with seldom-heard community
  - Changing the location, time and venues for two of the four (or six) meetings to be held during the day
  - Public Realm representation and attendance at ward panel meetings
  - Establishment of a Youth Council representative on the Safer Neighbourhood Board as part of inclusive and diversity agenda
  - Local authority to lead on a borough wide marketing campaign to publicise ward panels
  - A collaborative approach by Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB), ward panels and the Police to publicise ward panels.
  - Strengthening trust between the police and the ward's residents e.g. SNTs to lead and implement action-focussed minutes and jointly developing (at ward panels) a cultural framework of co-produced solutions.
  - Police prioritise attendance at ward panel meetings, as the fundamental purpose is to hold the police to account.
  - Local authority to develop a meaningful breakdown of community safety acronyms list to facilitate better resident understanding of key terminology
  - Mayor to lobby Home Office for more resources for 101 service
- 1.6. The report also sets out the approach and techniques used to engage with residents including co-producing some of the solutions that led to the final recommendations of the report.

## **2. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1. The report covers the implications of the public sector equality duty which addresses S149 (protected characteristics) of the Equality Act 2010. The application of the duty will facilitate meaningful engagement of seldom-heard groups with safer neighbourhood ward panels and their priorities reflect the views and concerns of all residents.

## **3. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report.

## **4. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 4.1. The Council has the legal power to undertake the recommendations detailed in this report. However, the implementation of the second bullet pointed recommendation will be dependent upon the decisions made by the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the prioritisation of attendance at the ward panels by the Police will be dependent upon the decision of the London Metropolitan Police and the agreements that this Council has with them.
- 4.2. There are no other legal implications arising from this report.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None

### **Appendices**

- Scrutiny Challenge Session Report

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None