

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Reference	Action	Assigned to	Scrutiny Lead	Due Date	Response
26/10 meeting	<p><u>1. Budget Monitor as at P5 for 2020/21</u> The Committee would require as part of the budget process in the next quarter a detailed breakdown of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid costs; • Recovery plans versus population vulnerability; and • What costs will not be reimbursed by Central Government. <p><u>2. Waste Service performance update</u> Next time, OSC wanted to see details of service improvement with particular reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in waste heading for reuse; street cleansing and bulk waste collections; • How it is now easier for people to report mis-collections through IT systems • How agency staff are used; and • Action plans for the West of the Borough e.g. Weavers; Spitalfields and Whitechapel. 	Kevin Bartle Dan Jones	OSC Chair OSC Chair & Scrutiny Lead for Env & Comm Safety	Next time this item returns to OSC	
23/11 meeting	<p><u>1. Strategic Performance Monitoring</u> Details on mitigation of poor performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of adults supported into employment by the WorkPath • Young people entering the youth justice system for the first time • Level of household recycling (quarterly audited) <p>In addition, that more detail should be provided within any future report</p> <p><u>2. COVID-19 update</u> OSC to review the Mayor’s response to the Committee’s COVID Review</p> <p><u>3. Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) Guide</u> Sought clarification on what OSC is able to do/act on as a part of the CCfA process</p>	Thorsten Dreyer OSC members Adam Boey	OSC chair	Before next meeting	<p>1. PDSQs’ responses provided before Cabinet on 25 Nov.</p> <p>2. OSC to provide comments to Chair</p> <p>3. Adam to work with Matthew Mannion to develop a communications approach for Members, including examples showing how and when to use CCfA.</p>

<p>14/12 meeting</p>	<p>1. <u>COVID-19 Update</u> The committee requested clarification as to why E1 Health Centre and White Chapel Health Centre were exempt or not participating in the Vaccination 1st Wave Site for Tower Hamlets</p> <p>2. <u>WorkPath</u> To bring back and review WorkPath Services in next year's scrutiny WP</p> <p>3. <u>MTFS 2021 -24 (Budget Update)</u> The Committee requested more information on how and why temporary accommodation costs have arisen and the extent to which this is COVID and non COVID related?</p> <p>The Committee requested more information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Rates • Covid Gap • What support is available from Government • Council Tax Support <p>The Committee agreed to hold a session (prior to the budget scrutiny meeting) on understanding business rates reset</p> <p>4. <u>AOB</u> The Committee welcomed the Executives response to the Call in - Change the Band 3 policy but didn't change the PRS policy. OSC to delegate responsibility to Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee to review the PRS policy and implications for waiting list in 6 months' time</p>	<p>Dr Somen Banerjee</p> <p>Vicky Clark</p> <p>Karen Swift</p> <p>Kevin Bartle</p> <p>Kevin Bartle</p> <p>Karen Swift</p>	<p>OSC Chair</p> <p>OSC Chair</p> <p>Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration on Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p>	<p>Before next meeting</p> <p>OSCs next year WP date TBC</p> <p>Before next meeting</p> <p>Before 11 Jan 2021 Budget Scrutiny Meeting</p> <p>June 2021</p>	<p>The increase in costs was Covid related because the service accommodated 200 single homeless people into accommodation (mainly commercial hotels). For those who came in not all costs were recoverable from housing benefit. For example, provision of three meals a day and floating support in the commercial hotels to assist hotel management with supporting residents. Some residents were not entitled to benefits, so the cost of their accommodation was not recoverable. Furthermore, the nightly rate in the commercial hotels was above the eligible housing benefit amounts, so even for those who were entitled for housing benefit, the full cost was not recoverable.</p> <p>The Committee was provided (on 07.01.2021 the information via a briefing session which covered business rate reset. Business rates and council tax and Covid funding. Slides were circulated to O&S members and awaiting on the update slides for Covid funding.</p>
<p>07/01 Meeting</p>	<p><u>Business Rate Reset/ Council Tax Reset and Covid</u></p>				<p>The CTR caseload has increased from 29,268 in March 2020 to currently 31,626, it was as high as 32,482 in May 2020.</p>

	<p><u>Funding briefing</u></p> <p>1. On the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, the Committee sort for clarification on how much of the increase in the cost of the scheme was as a result of the decision to suspend the income floor for self-employed claimants as part of bringing in line with suspension of universal credit</p>	<p>Roger Jones</p>	<p>O&S Committee</p>	<p>By next Meeting.</p>	<p>Overall, the cost of awarding CTR over the same period has increased from £27.9m to £31.4m. Some of this increase will be down to new claims and some will be down to changes in circumstances on existing claims such as and changes in income (an example of this would be the SEISS payments which will impact on self-employed claims) or changes to the number of people in the household.</p> <p>The DWP suspended the Minimum Income Floor (MIF) used in the assessment of Universal Credit (UC) in April 2020. Since March 2020 the number of CTR claims with Self Employed income has dropped from 857 to 838, but of these the number that are UC claims has increased from 443 to 573. All of these are no longer affected by the MIF.</p> <p>As a result of this the number of cases affected by the Council's MIF has decreased from 297 to 261 during the same period. Where we are advised that the MIF is causing hardship, we are looking at each case to assess whether S13a could be used to mitigate the effect of the MIF. To date this year, we have awarded £133,137.67 under Section 13a provisions to address the impact of the MIF being applied.</p> <p>We have had 358 applications so far and awarded in 213 cases and have a further 29 applications still being considered.</p> <p>We have also awarded £1.7m under the Hardship Fund to those who were assessed as still having something to pay.</p>
<p>11/01 meeting</p>	<p><u>Budget Scrutiny</u></p> <p>1. The Committee did not agree that population</p>	<p>Thorsten Dreyer</p>			<p>The published <u>Tower Hamlets Borough Profile</u> contains a dedicated section on population growth and change.</p>

	<p>growth was reflected proportionately across all age groups. The committee were of the view that the biggest increase was amongst 20's 30's and 40's age group and not children and older people and want to understand the what the drivers are.</p> <p>2. The Committee requested to understand the mapping around other services that will be stepping in to provide the service provided by Support for Learning Services</p>	<p>James Thomas</p>	<p>OSC Chair</p>	<p>Slides 7 and 8 provide an overview of population growth by age groups. The committee should note the distinction between increases in numbers and proportionate increase. While numbers in a group may have increased more in one group than another in absolute terms, the same may not be always true for the proportionate increase within each age groups.</p> <p>An example: The growth in 0-19 is higher as a proportion than the growth in adults as a proportion. The rate is higher in CYP so you would expect to see a proportionately larger increase in demand for their services even if the total demand for services in the 20 - 39 age group is bigger in absolute numbers.</p> <p>Slides 17 to 19 summarise the main factors driving population growth in the borough.</p> <p>The SLS will retain expertise in all of the areas of SEND that it currently has so will still be able to offer schools advice and training on speech and language, literacy, physical disabilities, assistive technology and to carry out its duties in relation to deaf and visually impaired children and young people.</p> <p>The Early Help Service works with the whole family and seeks to address the individual needs of every family member; the needs of individual family members are considered within the context of the broader family. Where there are children with specific needs including those children and Young People with SEND, the service will work with the family to address any concerns, advocating with schools and service providers as necessary ensuring that assessments are undertaken where necessary and appropriate. The Service will identify voluntary sector services who offer appropriate support and will sign post or refer as appropriate. The service has established relationships with the Parents Advice Centre, Children with Disabilities Team and the GP Care Group Social Prescribers who offer advice, support and interventions specifically to families where there is a child/child with SEND.</p>
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					<p>and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development/training for council officers working with families of SI and PD, including Early Help, Area Inclusion Co-ordinators to improve support and sign-posting • Work with the local college provider to further develop support for SI pupils with sensory needs to enable pupils with SI needs do not need to leave the borough for post-16 education • Use of the Local Offer and SENCo training to signpost schools and parents to support for SPLD in assessing needs, support strategies and guidance • <i>Following a review of integrated therapies by health colleagues, commissioning of therapies will be increased, particularly Speech and Language Therapy, for those in nursery and primary school for the academic year beginning September 2021.</i> • Review the allocation of support within nationally recognised frameworks, informed by evidence of the educational effectiveness of the use of a range of approaches to support educational development such as group work which capitalises on the inclusion of children with SEND working with peers and using 1:1 interventions only when there is a clear educational benefit <p><i>Following the public consultation on the change of use of the High Needs Funding Block, 4 more posts (2 in HI, 2 in VI) were added back in to the structure to expand the level of statutory service provision. An increase in SI posts by 4 from the original staffing proposal</i></p> <p>The document was shared with the OSC Members via Democratic Services on 22.01.2021</p>
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	<p>3. The Committee asked if the Children’s Long-Term Recovery Plan (went to DfE) can be shared because it provided context of the savings for Children</p> <p>4. The Committee requested to understand more detail of the capital borrowing fund and if the treasury management strategy could be shared</p>	<p>James Thomas</p> <p>Kevin Bartle</p>			<p>The papers for this can be sourced from the Audit Committee 28.01.2021 here</p>
<p>25/01 meeting</p>	<p><u>ASB</u></p> <p>1. Service to report back to scrutiny in March regarding consultation results on a pragmatic approach to ASB linked to nitrous oxide.</p>	<p>Ann Corbett</p>	<p>OSC Chair</p>	<p>01.03.2021</p>	<p>This is the summary of the result of the public consultation on the proposal to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order to prohibit the possession or use of psychoactive substances (including nitrous oxide) and which is causing or likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to members of the public.</p> <p>The consultation ran from 4th January 2021 and closed on the 15th of February 2021. It was widely publicised on the council’s website, social media feeds, community platforms such as Online Watch Link (OWL), Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF), Safer Neighbourhood Board, (SNB) and Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels.</p> <p>The consultation received 2584 visitors and 948 formal responses to the consultation, one of the highest responses for any consultation the council has undertaken.</p> <p>Of those 948 responses, 97.5% (924) were residents and overall, 93.7% (886) were in favour of introducing a PSPO. 89.4% (889) thought the PSPO should be boroughwide and 88.5% (838) said they had witnessed nitrous oxide misuse and that it made them feel</p>

	<p><u>Borough Commander Spotlight</u></p> <p>2. Borough Commander to provide demographic data on FPNs issued, and details on where money recovered goes</p>	<p>BC Marcus Barnett</p>		<p>01.03.2021</p>	<p>unsafe.</p> <p>The proposal is being progressed and is planned to be decided upon by cabinet in April.</p> <p>In relation to the demographic data on FPN's issued we sadly cannot break down the figures to show each individual Borough Command Unit or London Borough. The data is held centrally by the Metropolitan Police Service and the breakdown for London shows us that the large majority of the fines have been issued to young men from 18 to 30 years old: 16% Asian, 12% Black & 70% White. Gender: 77% male, 1% not specified and 22% female.</p> <p>Chief Inspector Pete Shaw has tried to find out what happens in regards to the money from the fines issued, however at this point we are not able to identify this specifically with the response from our central command team being that they believe it goes back to the government for it to then be redistributed however they feel suitable.</p>
<p>01/03 Meeting</p>	<p><u>Covid Update</u></p> <p>1. The Committee wants to understand the protocol or mitigation plans which will be in place for managing risk of Covid spikes (through social mixing) during the campaign period for and after the forthcoming election/referendum</p>	<p>Robert Curtis and Will Tuckley</p>	<p>O&S Committee Chair</p>	<p>22.03.2021</p>	<p>The risk assessments are being driven from the GLA with additional information relating to premises and staffing being added as part of our own project planning and risk assessments compiled for Will and associated Officers (See below).</p> <p>The issue with spikes, as we all know, is we can only prepare for the worst scenario with masks, provision of sanitiser, social distancing, ventilation, bubbles for staff, sneeze screens provided and appropriate training provided which will apply to the main three project areas namely postal vote opening, polling day and the count (GLA).</p> <p>In addition, GPC have and continue to be updated and all of the implications and scenarios are being discussed and addressed at the highest level through project boards both internal and external, where we are represented, along with advice from PHE, the</p>

					<p>Electoral Commission, Government (Cabinet Office) and the GLA.</p> <p>We are also liaising with our own Corporate Health & Safety (Tracey Gorbell) and Shuheda Uddin who is assisting us with the provision of PPE (Senior Commissioning Manager) In addition, I have also held a meeting with Rachel Buttrick and Andy Liggins and this will continue to be the case as we approach the official timetable.</p> <p>This is the responsibility of the Constituency Returning Officer (Althea Loderick - CEO Newham) who is the senior officer from the lead authority for the Constituency (City and East), Will Tuckley as Counting Officer for the Referendum and the Mary Harpley who is the Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) for the GLA all of whom are working closely together to get the precautions in place where considered necessary.</p>
	<p><u>Strategic Performance Q3 -2020/21</u></p> <p>2. The Committee wants to understand how the recycling rates and street cleaning performance is calculated</p>	Thorsten Dreyer		22.03.2021	See attached Evidence Appendix 1/1b for this response
	<p><u>Budget Monitoring Report as at 31.12.2020 (period 9)</u></p> <p>3. The Committee wants more detail information on delivery target for Legal Service and modernisation of the registration service (as part of the savings tracker) and what this means</p>	Janet F		26.04.2021	
	<p>4. The Committee requests more detailed information on the HRA approved capital programme for period 9</p>	Hitesh Jolapara		22.03.2021	See attached Appendix 2 for this response
	<p>5. The Committee requests an explanation on why</p>				

	<p>the Resources directorate has an overspend of £4.6m (indicated in the Cabinet Budget Monitoring report for period 9) for temporary accommodation, the basis of this overspend and why it has gone unnoticed for so long?</p>	<p>Karen Swift</p>			<p>In previous years it was not uncommon practice to only report gross overspends in Directorates and thus this specific overspend was being offset by underspends elsewhere. The Council's Finance Improvement Plan is looking to improve budget management and such reporting protocols have now been updated with the need to report all significant under and overspends, which is now taking place and has resulted in this particular overspend being brought to members' attention. The £4.6m overspend relates to the Housing Subsidy loss from placing Homeless clients into temporary accommodation (T.A.). Rents for T.A. are charged at current Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates + £40, in line with other London Boroughs. This cost is met through the client's Housing Benefit claim. LBTH claim back the Housing Benefit payment through its subsidy claim at 90% of 2011 LHA rates and the £4.6m represents the difference between the Housing Benefit paid out for T.A. and the amount it can claim back from central government. The rates being paid for TA are higher than the grant received from government and thus if the Council was able to procure more cost-effective accommodation, the level of spend would reduce.</p>