SCRUTINY CHALLENGE SESSION REPORT

Working in genuine partnership with seldom-heard residents to make our communities safer

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets
October 2019**

Appendix 1

Acknowledgements

Councillor Bex White (Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety), chair for this session, would firstly like to thank the local resident contributors for giving up their time to engage and participate in the challenge session. Much of what was discussed during the challenge session has informed the report and their contribution influenced many of the recommendations.

Residents:
Christina Ajagbe, David Burbidge, Sharon Currie, Lisa Folan, Mark Healey
Bee Lim, Shiblu Miah, Phillip Mullen, Samia Shire, Syed Uddin and others for their participation and contribution.

Councillors involved with the Challenge Session:

Councillor James King	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair, and Limehouse Ward)
Councillor Gabriella Salva Macallan	St Peter's Ward
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Bethnal Green Ward

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Officers:

Ann Corbett	Divisional Director for Community Safet and Substance Misuse
Charles Griggs	Head of Community Safety
Keith Daley	Interim Head of Substance Misuse
Calvin Mclean	Head of Neighbourhood Operations

External Members:

Jon Shapiro	Tower Hamlets Safer Neighbourhood Board Chair
Christopher Scammell	Tower Hamlets Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector (Metropolitan Police Service)

Strategy and Policy (scrutiny support):

Filuck Miah	Strategy and Policy Officer
Daniel Kerr	Strategy and Policy Manager
Genevieve Duval	Strategy and Policy Officer
Janette John	Strategy and Policy Officer

Chair's Foreword

Community safety is about feeling safe, whether you're at home, in the streets of Tower Hamlets or working in the borough. It connects you to quality of life and being able to pursue and achieve the benefits from your domestic, social and economic lives without fearing obstacles from crime and disorder.

Community safety remains a key Mayoral priority e.g. Priority 2: *A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in*. Our Council, along with local Police and the borough's Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) remain of the view that ward panels are an essential piece of the puzzle in delivering community policing. Devolving some of the community policing priorities at a local ward level provides an opportunity for local residents to become active and empowered members who go on to provide an asset based approach[1] for delivering on local community safety concerns.

As the scrutiny lead for the Environment and Community Safety portfolio, I commissioned this scrutiny challenge session to ensure that we learn from seldom-heard residents, we identify and remove barriers to their engagement and as a result we ensure their participation in safer neighbourhood ward panels. This will empower them to become more informed and better engaged on community safety issues. This in turn should enable the council and its partners to benefit from their contribution to community safety.

The challenge session was well attended by residents, council officers and our partners, and a number of new insights were shared into how we can work better together to strengthen ward panels and to make them representative of the community.

The report makes a number of practical recommendations for key stakeholder partners to take on board and put into action for improving engagement and participation of seldom-heard residents on community safety concerns.

I'd like to thank the residents who gave their time and thoughtful contributions to this report – I hope that what you read here reflects what you said to us, and that we can continue to work together moving forward.

Councillor Bex White
Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety

---

[1] https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/

Appendix 1

Contents

		Page
1	**Recommendations**	5
2	Introduction	6
	Methodology	7
3	**Background**	10
-	Local context	10
-	The Confidence Cycle	12
-	Legal	13
	Public Sector Equality Duty	13
4	Findings	15
5	**Appendices**	
-	Residents' comments Barriers and Solutions	20-21
-	Crime Rated Maps 2017 – 2019	22-23

Appendix 1

1. Recommendations

Recruitment and training	
R1	Tower Hamlets ward panels to develop and recruit to vice chair roles
R2	Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) to incentivise learning and development opportunities for ward panels vice chairs e.g. how to promote inclusion and engagement with seldom-heard community
Fostering and encouraging participation	
R3	Changing the location, time and venues for two of the four (or six) meetings to be held during the day
R4	LBTH Public Realm representation and attendance to ward panel meetings
R5	Establishment of a Youth Council representative on the Safer Neighbourhood Board to enhance inclusion and better understanding of diversity
Advancing the publicity of ward panels	
R6	Local authority to lead on a borough-wide marketing campaign to publicise ward panels
R7	A collaborative approach by Safer Neighbourhood Board, ward panels and the Police to publicise the visibility of ward panels.
Strengthening trust	
R8	Strengthening the trust between the Police and the ward's residents e.g. lead and implement action-focussed minutes and jointly developing (via ward panels) a cultural framework of co-produced solutions.
R9	Police prioritisation of attendance of ward panel meetings, as the fundamental purpose is to hold the Police to account.
Developing tools for engagement and participation	
R10	Local authority to develop a meaningful breakdown of community safety acronyms list to facilitate better resident understanding of key terminology
Strengthening funding capacity	
R11	Mayor to lobby Home Office for more resources for 101 service

2. Introduction

Reason for Enquiry

2.1. The Overview and Scrutiny annual work programme 2019-20 identified the need to examine reasons for low participation and engagement from seldom-heard residents with the ward panels and how this can be improved.

2.2. The Council's annual resident survey (ARS)[2] (surveyed 1,104 residents). Findings suggest that crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) has remained for 2018 – 2019[3] the top personal concern for the borough's residents.

2.3. Furthermore, the justification for the enquiry remains consistent with the Mayoral priority and Council's strategic plan[4] e.g. priority 2 – A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in; outcome 7 – People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled.

2.4. For the purpose of this report, we shall refer to Safer Neighbourhood Board as SNB, Safer Neighbourhood Teams (consists of the Police Sergeants, Police Constables, Police Community Support Officers) as SNTs, anti-social behaviour as ASB and Overview and Scrutiny Committee as OSC

2.5. For this report, it is vital to understand the definition of the term 'seldom-heard groups' as they are the most important stakeholders for the challenge session. Some research suggests[5] these are under-represented people with vulnerability factors[6] e.g. health and disability, equalities / discrimination factors, economic, personal and family circumstances. Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group[7] further suggests that 'seldom-heard' is a term for groups who may be experiencing barriers to accessing services. It is also worth noting that 'seldom-heard' groups have previously been termed 'hard to reach' groups, but the more recent terminology places the onus on authorities to listen better, rather than blaming those whose voices are not heard.

2.6. The Public Sector Equality Duty[8] (PSED) plays a key role in terms factoring protected characteristics (S149 of the Equality Act 2010) that 'seldom-heard groups' fall into.

2.7. The challenge session scope had also identified a number of key reasons for justifying the investigation of this topic. These have been

---

[2] https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Annual_Residents_Survey_results_2018.pdf
[3] https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/2019_ARS_Briefing_Paper.pdf
[4] https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Strategy-and-performance/TH_Strategic_Plan.pdf
[5] https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/insights/effectively-involving-seldom-heard-groups
[6] https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/engaging-with-communities
[7] https://www.southwarkccg.nhs.uk/news-and-publications/publications/policies-strategies-registers/Documents/Engaging%20with%20Seldom%20Heard%20Voices%20and%20Outreach.pdf
[8] https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06591/SN06591.pdf

identified as the following: low resident engagement with ward panels; low awareness of the Online Watch Link[9] (OWL) system; low awareness of enforcement activities and community improvements and resident's perception of feeling unsafe.

Methodology

2.8.   The objective for the challenge session was to identify the barriers to engagement and then focus on solutions that helped to bring about the desired outcome: seldom-heard group residents being more informed and better engaged on community safety.

2.9.   To support this process, the challenge session embedded two core questions; acting as a reference point for framing the sessions activities and more importantly to enable seldom-heard residents who attended the challenge session to use their personal experiences and comment on ward panels and community safety. The questions focussed on the following:

*   How can participation of seldom-heard groups be enhanced?
*   How can residents be empowered to improve safety in their own neighbourhood?

2.10.   The approach also stipulated areas that it would not cover or were considered out of scope. This included the central ASB reporting system (as the ASB reporting system is a new product and requires operational time to be established) and actions covered from last year's OSC trilogy report[10] 2018-19 to avoid repetition. The report will acknowledge and make references to some of the OSC's trilogy report recommendations for context only.

2.11.   The challenge session was chaired by Councillor Bex White, Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety on the OSC and supported by Filuck Miah, Strategy and Policy Officer.

Members in attendance:

Councillor Bex White (chair)	OSC Member and scrutiny lead for Environment and Community Safety (Chair)
Councillor James King	Chair of OSC
Councillor Eve McQuillan	OSC Member
Councillor Gabriella Salva Macallan	Scrutiny Member

Panel members:

Ann Corbett	Divisional director for Community Safety and Substance Misuse
Charles Griggs	Head of Community Safety
Keith Daley	Interim Head of Substance Misuse
Calvin Mclean	Head of Neighbourhood Operations

[9] https://www.owl.co.uk/met/
[10] http://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/s157560/Enc.%203%20for%20Response%20to%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committees%20recommendations%20on%20Safety%20Aspiration%20and%20l.pdf

Appendix 1

| Jon Shapiro | SNB chair for Tower Hamlets |
| Christopher Scammell | Tower Hamlets Safer Neighbourhood Inspector (Metropolitan Police Service) |

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Daniel Kerr	Strategy and Policy Manager, Strategy Policy and Performance Division
Filuck Miah	Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy Policy and Performance Division
Genevieve Duval	Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy Policy and Performance Division
Janette John	Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy Policy and Performance Division

2.12. The challenge session was structured in the following way to facilitate seldom-heard resident engagement:

1	Chair's welcome and introduction to the session
2	Icebreaker – encouraging dialogue
3	Exercise part 1 – Barriers to engagement with ward panels
4	Exercise part 2 – Developing solutions for engagement with ward panels
5	Feedback, response from panel members (learning from the session)
6	Chairs summary and closing remarks

2.13. An essential element to the session's approach was to ensure that there were 20-30 seldom-heard residents who could participate and meaningfully engage. The approach differed from the traditional scrutiny methodology and provided the following benefits:
- Opportunity for panel members, ward Councillors and seldom-heard residents to engage in meaningful dialogue on community safety issues.
- Capturing seldom-heard resident's views and opinions as part of local intelligence gathering to support the development of final report recommendations.
- Empowering seldom-heard residents to air their views on barriers to engagement and lead on developing solutions for improving engagement with ward panels.
- The challenge session approach mirrored what engagement could look like through a testing methodology, which could be implemented at ward panel levels.

2.14. Location, venue (environmental context), timing and accessibility were also considered as part of the methodology. The thinking behind this was to ensure that session adhered to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which covered being inclusive e.g. seldom-heard residents who have mobility issues or even those on low income unable to afford the travel.

2.15. Using community settings to deliver the challenge session was explored and remained under strong consideration. However limitations e.g. time pressures, unable to guarantee availability of community space and accessibility, logistics and technology challenges resulted in us using the town hall's Council chamber as the default venue. According to feedback from participants on the setting, for some the corporate environment can be intimidating and cause anxiety but for others being invited to speak in a 'prestigious institution' has kudos, and can be empowering and liberating.

2.16. A range of techniques were used to promote the event. This included:
- Councillor White created a short publicity video promoting the reasons for the challenge and inviting the borough's local seldom-heard residents to participate.
- Council communication channels using the social media feed.
- Using the Council's commissioned and third sector providers to access local residents.
- Promoting via the internal newsletter and community and voluntary sector.
- Promoting via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and wider non-executive Councillors.
- Promoting using the scrutiny network and 'Yammer'.

2.17. As part of the modernising approach to engagement with local residents Slido[11] was introduced to enable residents to anonymously ask questions via a portal on their smart phone. This enabled residents who were not comfortable with group discussions to participate and ask questions. Additionally, it helped to keep the session running on schedule and minimised disruption.

2.18. An icebreaker was implemented at the beginning of the session e.g. using borough maps to understand the participant's perception of feeing safe/unsafe and then comparing this with Police crime data intelligence maps (see appendices two and three 2017-2019). This enabled residents to engage in meaningful dialogue (personal experiences of community safety) and facilitate a robust discussion. This also contributed valuable insights into resident perception and the drivers of this.

2.19. A one page community safety 'acronym buster' was also incorporated into the information pack as this helped participants to understand key terminologies as this could potentially pose a risk of miscommunication and disengagement.

---

[11] https://www.sli.do/

3. Background

Local Context

3.1. Ward panels in Tower Hamlets should play an important role in community policing. There are currently 20 ward panels and one SNB 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.

3.2. Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) e.g. local community police provide support and remain accountable to ward panels. SNTs are expected to attend ward panel meetings and provide updates on policing issues in the ward; taking into account concerns raised by ward panel members and responding to their questions.

3.3. Ward panels influence and define local policing challenges and have scope to agree and set three key priorities (empowering them to identify and implement solutions to local problems) for the SNTs to address and communicate these priorities within the ward. The priorities should be reviewed at every ward panel meeting to assess the level of success or failure as well as updating the priorities.

3.4. Community safety remains a key Mayoral priority and one of the key outcomes for the Council's Strategic Plan[12]. From intelligence gathered for 2018[13] and 19[14] ARS, the findings continue to support that crime and ASB remains the top personal concern for Tower Hamlets residents (1,104 surveyed). Furthermore the ARS from 2019 suggests that residents feeling of safety drops by 28% from day to night. This does highlight the variance of day and night time economies; the implication of community safety and feeling safe.

Figure 6: Feelings of safety during the day and after dark (%) in Tower Hamlets, 2019
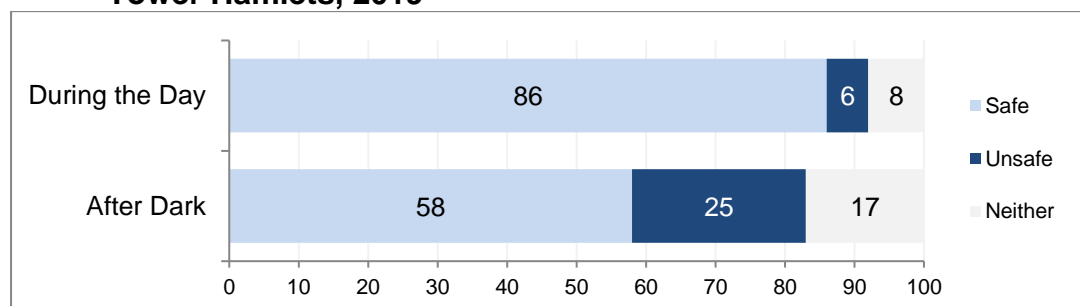
[12] https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Strategy-and-performance/TH_Strategic_Plan.pdf
[13] https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Annual_Residents_Survey_results_2018.pdf
[14] https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/2019_ARS_Briefing_Paper.pdf

3.5.   The borough's profile provides some context around the challenges of engagement. Tower Hamlets is the 16th most diverse borough in England[15] and it has the largest Bangladeshi population in the country, making up almost a third of the borough's population[16]. More than 43% of the residents were born outside the UK[17].

3.6.   There are wider benefits of having good public engagement in terms of avoiding financial costs associated with enforcing the law, detecting crime and processing offenders. Ward panel engagement influences the design and delivery of services from the outset. This supports the police to deliver and meet the priorities set by the ward panel. Ward panel engagement should be considered as a core element of local community policing activity. Effective engagement can also operate as an enabler for fostering social responsibility.

3.7.   The College of Policing accepts that leadership commitment plays a vital role in ensuring engagement is effective. Furthermore, effective engagement requires focussing on residents and results from engagement are integrated into service design and delivery and communities are involved in that delivery such as ward panels.

3.8.   Implications of low engagement suggest that it can lead to a loss of public confidence in the police. The challenge it leaves to the police is that it will be difficult to predict changes to the community profile, needs and priorities. Additionally there will be increased vulnerabilities around threat, risk and harm, services becoming less responsive and unrealistic public expectations.

3.9.   The College of Policing use the Confidence Cycle to highlight the relationship between community engagement and increased public confidence in the police. It is their view that greater co-operation from the community can enrich its intelligence gathering
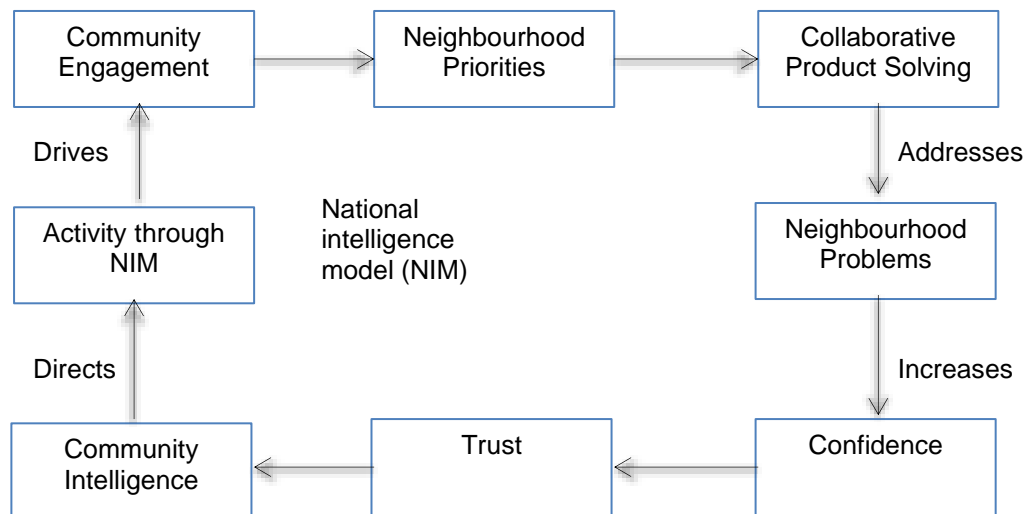
---

[15] Tower Hamlets Borough Profile 2018
[16] Tower Hamlets Borough Profile 2018
[17] Tower Hamlets Borough Profile 2018

The Confidence Cycle

Source: College of Policing

3.10. The Confidence Cycle suggests that engagement with community groups, including those seldom-heard, helps to piece together intelligence on issues that affect the neighbourhood and can be used to develop local priorities for policing local communities.

3.11. The College of Policing's model strengthens the need for seldom-heard resident's engagement with ward panels as it considers the importance of looking beyond representatives or community groups to ensure engagement reaches seldom-heard community members themselves so they are involved in decision-making.

3.12. It is further suggested that safer neighbourhood ward level engagement remains a long-term process that is flexible for communities to access, influence, intervene and provide answers to local policing problems and solutions. Their engagement will not only draw out concerns of local people and gaps in crime and ASB reporting but also is a tool for meaningful participation. Iriss[18] (2011) further suggests that an everyday approach to participation where there is no distinction between participation and service delivery is the most effective in supporting seldom-heard groups.

3.13. The challenge for engaging seldom-heard groups particularly from a vulnerable setting suggests they may be preoccupied with 'just about managing' to fulfil their basic needs thus limiting any focus on wider issues.

---

[18] https://www.iriss.org.uk/.../insights/effectively-engaging-involving-seldom-heard-groups

3.14. Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) 2008a identified a variety of obstacles experienced by seldom-heard groups with engagement including attitudinal, organisational, cultural and practical barriers. The organisation context highlights issues of communication e.g. not enough thinking time for some people with impairments.

Legal

3.15. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011[19] imposes legal responsibilities on Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) which will be relevant to seldom-heard groups engaging with ward panels this includes:

3.16. **Section 1(8) e** - the chief constable is accountable for the effective and efficient engagement with local people.
Section 17 - duties when carrying out functions – an elected local policing body must have regard to the views of people in the body's area about policing in that area
Section 34 - engagement with local police – a chief officer must make arrangements for obtaining the views of people within each neighbourhood about crime and disorder and make arrangements for providing such people with information about policing in that neighbourhood.

3.17. The OSC's trilogy report builds on the above in that it recommends facilitation of effective information sharing at ward level to support effective local decision making processes.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

3.18. The PSED[20] focuses on the S149 (protected characteristics) of Equality Act 2010 and it sets out key principles for public authorities that must in exercise of its function have due regard e.g. seldom-heard groups.

3.19. Advancing of equality of opportunity S149 (1)(B) relates to integrating equality considerations into all areas of a public authority's work and take measures to remove barriers and acknowledging that sometime full equality in practice means difference in treatment. The application of this in the context for ward panel's membership could suggest on being aware that evening meetings are particularly challenging for those groups who feel less safe after dark, including groups who feel at risk of hate-crime or who have caring responsibilities.

3.10. Fostering good relations in this context S149 (1)(c) suggests public authorities are to have due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. This remains significant in tackling prejudice and

---

[19] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/contents/enacted
[20] https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06591/SN06591.pdf

promotes understanding particularly when engaging with different seldom-heard group residents.

3.11.   Application of the duty applies in three ways but the significance for ward panels should consider "where persons are not public authorities but exercise public functions, the duty applies in respect of the exercise of those functions setting priorities and holding the police to account would qualify as application of the PSED".

3.12.   Lent and Studdert[21] (2019), suggest that the police (SNT) and seldom-heard residents will need to hold greater collaboration, using a partnership arrangement but maintaining the principles of trust and respect when engaging in ward panel activity. It suggests that seldom-heard residents must be trusted and respected by the police to have insight into their own needs and freedom to develop solutions for themselves – less of a beneficiary, now an active partner.

---

[21] http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/2019/the-community-paradigm-why-public-services-need-radical-change-and-how-it-can-be-achieved/

4. Findings

4.1.   The challenge session created participation activities, which facilitated seldom-heard residents to engage and capture their views and opinions around engagement with ward panels and community safety.

4.2.   One of the key barriers to engagement for seldom-heard residents focussed on having reflective representation on ward panels. The seldom-heard residents commented that there was low engagement from young people and therefore failed to capture a key player's perspective on community safety. The residents felt that this was important as youth violence, crime and ASB were considered significant not only in Tower Hamlets but London wide.

4.3.   The challenge session further highlighted that residents consider barriers such as: spoken English language; level of general education; diversity and cultural sensitivity in the borough; lack of involvement of ethnic minority women; social class division between those with wealth and those living with poverty; levels of employment against high unemployment in specific wards to have significant implications for recruitment and retention of active ward panel members. Tower Hamlets SNB chair acknowledged there was low participation from young people on ward panels. Furthermore, OSC's trilogy report[22] 2018-19 recommendation four highlights the need to increase participation and engagement with young people. In addressing the above, the chair made the following recommendation:

R1	Tower Hamlets ward panels to develop and recruit to vice chair roles, focussed on building representative participation.

4.4.   The recommendation implies that each of the borough's 20 ward panels recruit a vice chair. Vice chairs can deputise (in absence of main chair) the ward panel meeting thus minimising cancellation of ward panel meetings. The recommendation advises recruitment focus on the under 25 age group representation to address the above and more widely a gender-balanced approach to diversity (embedding S149 protected characteristics of Equality Act 2010) to the membership of ward panels. Furthermore, the recommendation implies that the vice

---

[22]http://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/s157560/Enc.%203%20for%20Response%20to%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committees%20recommendations%20on%20Safety%20Aspiration%20and%20I.pdf

Appendix 1

chair should (as part their role) focus on promoting as well as recruiting seldom-heard residents for ward panels.

4.5. The session's seldom-heard residents commented that there was a lack of incentive for participating in ward panels. It further indicates that the current offer provides very little benefits for participation. To create a tangible incentive for participation the chair suggests the following recommendation on training:

R2	**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**

4.5. This recommendation focuses on particularly developing strong engagement skills to further attract engagement from the seldom-heard community. Additional benefits of this recommendation suggest that it provides to the individual soft skills development and progression for building their CV portfolio.

4.6. Another key obstacle was the location venue and schedule used to conduct ward panel meetings. These were often held in the evening and the residents felt that this was significant enough to put them off from participating. They highlighted limitations around access for people with disability and those with parenting or care responsibilities. Meetings during winter months (when it gets dark early) is further indicated and supported by Council's ARS 2019 which suggests 58% residents (sample 1104) remained concerned about feeling safe after dark. Although the main responsibility lies with SNB to monitor locations and venues, the Council's own experience suggests that implementing a diverse venue and location strategy e.g. exploring venues that are being used by seldom-heard communities for brokering better reach and engagement. Given the above feedback, the chair recommends the following:

R3	**Changing the location, time and venues for two of the four (or six) meetings to be held during the day**

4.7. The prime objective is to facilitate more participation from the seldom-heard resident groups with ward panels, who otherwise would not be able to commit.

4.8. The challenge session drew out more commonly the concerns on community safety in the context of public realm issues e.g. Poor street lighting, dark and narrow pathways, subways and graffiti leading to perceived concerns of fear and intimidation. Ward Councillors at the session suggested that the Council should consider how it works more closely with community volunteers in order to ensure that as many community spaces are open in the evenings as possible. Furthermore, attendance of Council's Public Realm representatives at ward panels

will help to facilitate dialogue with residents (from a particular ward) about their views e.g. Liveable Streets programme from a community safety context. The chair further recommends:

R4	**Public Realm representation and attendance at ward panel meetings**

4.9. Both OSC's trilogy report 2018-19 and the challenge session's resident feedback highlighted a key need for participation and engagement with young people. The chair's recommendation is to ensure that a Youth Council member is represented on the SNB. The view is that this will strengthen inclusivity and diversity of the board and further develop peer-to-peer reach strategies for young people to engage at ward levels.

R5	**Establishment of a Youth Council representative on the Safer Neighbourhood Board as part of inclusive and diversity agenda**

4.10. A key concern for seldom-heard residents remains about the publicity of the borough's SNB and local ward panels. Residents fed back on the lack of publicity around awareness and the visibility of opportunities for ward panels. Furthermore, the residents highlighted the lack of user friendliness of the police website, that there remains a percentage of the borough's population that do not or have not access to the Internet at home or are not confident with using the internet. Ward Councillors suggested caution on over reliance of the Internet as the main form of publicity for ward panels. The Council's ARS suggests that only 51% of residents (Sample 1104) use the Council website to source information and only 11% for social media. In order to refresh, promote and showcase the borough's 20 ward panels the chair recommends:

R6	**Local authority to lead on a borough wide marketing campaign to publicise ward panels**

4.11. The Council has delivered a successful borough-wide Place Campaign and remains in a strong position with a borough wide reach to promote the borough' 20 ward panels. The Tower Hamlets ward panel guidance[23] suggests that SNTs must use all existing local communication mechanisms to share information with the wider public. Tower Hamlets Safer Neighbourhood Inspector is of the view that we should advertise the following:
Defining what a ward panel is and highlighting the substantial impact ward panels have on the local community safety with the goal of increasing greater participation from residents on ward panels.

4.12. Taking a collaborative approach to publicising ward panels should help the 'golden thread' alignment of SNB, SNT and ward panels in communicating the same message. The advantage of opening this up

---

[23]https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_safety__crime_preve/anti-social_behaviour/Safer_Neighbourhoods/Safer_Neighbourhoods.aspx

to ward panel members will help to develop and tailor a bespoke approach, which may be required to for specific engagement with a particular ward. The findings suggest that empowering seldom-heard residents to designing the publicity will facilitate the local knowledge and wisdom with specific group engagement.

4.13. The police's current practice to disseminate safety or priority updates is delivered using the social media site Twitter and some wards produce a newsletter highlighting activities undertaken to meet local police priorities. The SNB chair is of the view that local policing priorities should be promoted on Metropolitan Police Service website but are not currently. The SNB chair further suggests that local ward Councillors are a good source for recruiting suitable members from seldom-heard groups to join their ward panels

4.14. Last year's OSC's trilogy report 2018-2019 recommends encouraging 'hard to reach' residents to engage with different kinds of participation events e.g. annual 'open' ward panel meetings. Tower Hamlets ward panel guidance offers an SNT public communication approach but the recommendation below strengthens the approach through collaboration. The chair recommends the following:

R7	**A collaborative approach by Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB), ward panels and the Police to publicise ward panels.**

4.15. Lack of trust was a key issue that the seldom-heard residents raised. This was due to the lack of visibility for actions on local police priorities, which has had a profound impact on the seldom-heard resident's level of confidence with SNTs. Often residents suggested that they disengaged with the police as they felt they were not being listened to. Residents felt the need to apologise (show contrition) when things don't go well or according to plan was important in maintaining the relationship with residents and building trust. The chair suggests the following recommendation:

R8	**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.**

4.16. Action-focussed minutes need to support the priorities set by the ward panels and equally feedback on progress of priorities, actionable results and key messages remain crucial in reassuring the community that local policing understands the issues that matter to local people.

4.17. The residents commented that there has been a lack of advocacy; lack of understanding of the processes particularly with 101 which led to resident frustration and a feeling of poor response, little or no feedback from local SNTs. This further diminishes the SNTs' credibility

particularly around accountability and community trust. The Tower Hamlets ward panel guide suggests that SNT sergeants should be open and honest as to the true capacity of work they can undertake. SNB and ward panels hold SNTs to account. It has been suggested that there has been poor attendance of ward panels from SNTs. Therefore the chair recommends:

R9	Police prioritise attendance at ward panel meetings, as the fundamental purpose is to hold the police to account.

4.18. The use of community safety jargon, acronyms or abbreviations can be challenging for seldom-heard residents whose first language may not be English, have poor literacy or learning difficulties. The residents commented that key terminology is often used at meetings which they do not understand. This led to miscommunication; much-needed interruption to provided clarification of terminology; disengagement and poor policing local priorities/outcomes. Community safety terminology should be easy enough for residents to understand in order to achieve a meaningful dialogue when they engage with ward panels. The chair expresses the following recommendation to address the above:

R10	Local authority to develop a meaningful breakdown of community safety acronyms list to facilitate better resident understanding of key terminology

4.19. The residents had concerns about the 101 non-emergency services[24] to report incidents of crime and ASB. This currently costs residents 15 pence per call and residents can report crimes such a stolen vehicle, property damage or suspicion of drug use or dealing in the neighbourhood. Although the SNB have no formal power to elevate this, residents feel that this service is not operating effectively as a call can take as long as an hour waiting for a response. There remains a lack of understanding of the processes and this has led to loss of public confidence in the local police response. It suggests that more resource is required to make the service more responsive and effective. The chair recommends the following:

R11	Mayor to lobby Home Office for more resources for 101 service

A proposal for how to manage this process going forward has been developed. New arrangements will be put in place in the New Year.

---

[24] https://www.police.uk/contact/101/

5. Appendices

Appendix 1

Seldom-heard group resident's perception and feedback on barriers and Solutions to engagement collated from the session:

Barriers
- *Money/ resources – without funds it is difficult to participate*
- *Language culture sensitiveness – involving women*
- *Use of acronyms*
- *Lack of awareness of opportunities (ward panels)*
- *Lack of advocacy*
- *Access to information and website is it up to date?*
- *Percentage of population not able to access the Internet*
- *Opt in system to get information – barrier to people need to know about it opt in*
- *Panel Meeting venue / time and location*
- *Access for disabled people – physical access*
- *Lack of understanding of process – leads to frustration i.e. 101 service*
- *Level of communication between community safety and resident*
- *Police Website difficult to access and scroll local borough information, old site had designated pages*
- *Lack of monitoring or perception regarding police (lack of SNTs) resource*
- *'Will' - The will to work together*
- *Social / class divide – poor / rich areas; work /non-working areas*
- *Lack of knowledge about structures*
- *Trust issues for residents – not listening/responding*
- *Outcomes not communicated to residents – puts off participation*
- *Not listening to serious residents' concerns*
- *Barriers – Economic, Social, Culture, Technology, Language, Disability, Ethnicity, Education, Class.*
- *Council vs Resident - values don't translate for same as residents – where is the action.*
- *Timing of panels for parents remain a challenge meetings pm (evening)*
- *Trust –talking to people in person, working with trusted people*
- *Going to places where people go (e.g. Mosques)*
- *Time commitment how to involve parents and those working several jobs?*
- *Trust – lost confidence*
- *Trust in authorities i.e. institutional racism*
- *Having to move a lot no stability for renters in private sector*
- *Not seeing people like me*
- Formality

Solutions

- *Intermediary urgent (grassroots – Leaders in community) to link hard to reach groups with police and community safety teams*
- *Incentives for resident's i.e. training CV improvements*
- *Change SNT – shift times to tackle evening crimes – reassure public*
- *Northampton experiment*
- *Identify key community areas, 'feeder' schools, parent groups areas of high volume of ASB by young people*
- *CS members should have links / literature to hand to resident i.e. Cllr Surgeries*
- *Marketing Campaign - ward panels and community safety process*
- *Community safety 'active citizens' champion programme which covers the basics – ideal for ward panel members and interested residents to increase knowledge*
- *Access information for events – ensure all events promoted by the Council includes basic access information for disabled people*
- *Communication's strategy to increase Facebook Instagram and twitter following – so these channels can be used to signpost information and news updates*
- *Regular campaigns to encourage people to opt in to ward mailing list /OWL – promote via social media too.*
- *Improve website information so information about Tower Hamlets, SNB, Wards, opt in, links to police website is clearer and easy to navigate*
- *SNB to promote panel to tenancy residents associations, Housing newsletters, faith spaces etc.*
- *Support resident members to undertake activities that improve or disrupt ASB in the area (community events / awareness raising)*
- *Directory of Acronyms on website*
- *Panels to feed into wider social action campaign i.e. social media campaign to tackle knife crime*
- *Youth Engagement*
- *Young Mayor involvement*
- *Youth clubs*
- *Better coordination of messaging, interventions between parties*
- *Reach out to specialist groups e.g. working with harder to reach groups*
- *Need to encourage better diversity by using all available channels*
- *Rebuild trust by acknowledging breakdown in trust*
- *Proper leadership, role models in elected Councillors*
- *Incentives for engagement*
- *Look at the times/location of meetings*

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 1

Appendix 3