

Scrutiny Leads Updates OSC Meeting 26th July 2021

Councillor Bex - Scrutiny Lead for Children and Education

1. At the 22nd June 2021 meeting:

The Sub-Committee focused on parks, education, and the violence, vulnerability, and exploitation strategy.

2. Work Programme:

The Lead Member met on 19th June 2021 with officers, the Cabinet Member, and Corporate Director to agree a provisional work plan for the coming year and to update on issues across the department.

3. SEND Inspection

The SEND inspection took place 28th June 2021 to 2nd July, 2021. The outcome is however still embargoed at the time of reporting. September's sub-committee will review the result and any quality improvements arising.

4. Poverty Prevention Work

A meeting was held with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and officers to discuss the findings of their poverty prevention work, and to look at how scrutiny might be able to add value to this work stream. In particular, there were discussions on the impact of poverty on children's mental health, and strategies to build resilience in families.

Councillor Ehtasham Haque- Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration

1. Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meetings 2021/22:

There are 5 meetings scheduled for the forthcoming year:

- 22nd June 2021.
- 9th September 2021.
- 19th October 2021.
- 2nd December 2021; and
- 15th March 2022.

2. At the 22nd June 2021 meeting:

The Sub-Committee considered:

- A presentation on the Planning White Paper
- A special extended "scoping session" on fire safety following the fire at the tower block at New Providence Wharf in May 2021.

3. Actions arising from the Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 22nd June 2021:

The presentation on the Planning White Paper was primarily for information and was duly noted, however the Chair and fellow sub-committee Members expressed concern that:

- the proposals formed a ‘developers charter’: a permissive approach which would reduce involvement of local people and elected members and would allow inappropriate and over-development in the borough; and
- It was recommended that the council should be vocal in its rejection of the proposed policies and join with the various groups opposing them.

In terms of the fire safety scoping review, the Chair invited 2 residents to attend the meeting to help us formulate a “deeper dive” into residents’ concerns following the New Providence Wharf fire:

- Ruth Bravery, who is the lead volunteer of the Friends in High Places leaseholder group – a self-help group for resident leaseholders from 40 sites around the Isle of Dogs and local neighbourhoods in LBTH – representing approx. 9,000 flats. Ruth’s speech included a number of key asks of under the heading of “what can Tower Hamlets” (the council) do.
- Yasmin Naqushbandi, Chair of the New Providence Wharf Leaseholder & Resident Association, who delivered a statement sharing her experience, concerns, and key issues regarding fire safety at NPW and in general from her perspective as a resident and leaseholder.
- Officers have embarked on the deep dive which will be carried out over the summer months with the results reported to our next sub-committee meeting on the 9th September 2021.

4. The Items to be considered at the next meeting on the 9th September 2021:

Item	Actions/Recommendations
Policy Framework Scrutiny - Social Landlords Performance Report	Focussed discussion on performance of THH RP's with rotating focus on a RP and the relevant TRA (RP to be identified).
Spotlight Report - on the Housing Allocations Audit Report and Intermediate Housing	Review of findings of the audit report into housing allocations and the council’s response including the development of an intermediate
Scrutiny Review – “Deep Dive” – Fire Safety	The report back from the “deep Dive” and what lessons can be learned from the fire at New Providence Wharf, what is currently being done and what can be improved to mitigate the risk of fires.

5. Other Actions:

The Chair has met key officers within the Place Directorate who cover the remit of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny sub-Committee and, going forward, the Chair plans to meet with at least one of these key members of staff every quarter.

Faroque Mahfuz Ahmed Scrutiny lead update for Environment and Community Safety

1. Provided feedback for suggested areas to OSC should consider as part of their work programme 2021/22.
2. Attended OSC for scrutiny of Outturn Strategic Performance Delivery Report 2020/21.
3. Attended Council’s Strategic Target Setting Briefing Session.
4. Arranging meetings with Divisional Directors – Ann Corbett and Dan Jones to discuss any key objectives and issues for portfolio area that scrutiny needs to be aware of and how & where scrutiny might be best placed to provide support and add value; and

5. Attending “Antisocial Behaviour Awareness Week” meetings across the borough (19th to 24th July 2021) as part of intelligence gathering for portfolio area and OSC.

Leema Qureshi Scrutiny lead update for Scrutiny Lead for Resources and Finance

1. Provided feedback for suggested areas to OSC that should be considered as part of the work programme for 2021/22.
2. Meeting with the Director of Resource to discuss budget and implications for the forth coming year looking at how the budget is shaping, savings, overspends and continuing challenges.
3. Arranging a meeting with the new Director for Customer Services (July 2021) to discuss areas such as digital inclusion and poverty
4. Meeting with the Cllr Whitehead and HoS for Audit and Risk (in September/October 2021) to discuss issues and areas that might be useful for O&S to consider.
5. The development of the scope for the challenge session on Workforce Diversity (November 2021) is currently being considered.