

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Reference	Action	Assigned to	Scrutiny Lead	Due Date	Response
<b>24/05 Meeting</b>	1. <u>BAME inequalities Commission Report</u> Note to be provided to O&S Committee on details of any allegations (individual claims of discrimination) presented to the Commission and how this has been taken forward.	Sharon Godman	OSC Chair	28/06	See attached appendix 1 for response (June OSC papers)
	2. <u>Air Quality Action Plan Report</u> Add an air quality monitoring station for the Council's Blackwall Depo due to Euro 6 Vehicle emission standards in the area (as part of Air Quality Report Recommendation	Dan Jones & Dave Tolley	OSC Chair	28/06	Set up an air quality monitoring station for the Council's Blackwall Depot due to Euro 6 Vehicle emission standards in the area. This to take the form of an additional NOx tube to be included near the depot site. Completion date: 31 Aug 2021
<b>12/07 Meeting</b>	<u>Strategic Target Setting Briefing Session</u> 1. Submit recommendations from target setting briefing to Mayors Office. Mayor and IP officers to provide a response to committee comments/recs.	Mayor & Thorsten Dreyer	OSC Chair	13/08	Response received and circulated (via email) to O&S Members 29.01.2021
<b>28/07 Meeting</b>	1. <u>Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel Action Plan</u> Request a copy of the letter from the Mayor to the Home Office lobbying for further resources to 101 service	Ann Corbett & Stephen Bramah	OSC Chair	13/08	Complete
	2. <u>Outturn Budget 2020/21 Report</u> Request a briefing note on the ongoing squeeze on expenditure through the HRA and THH management fee	Ann Sutcliffe	OSC Chair	13/08	Complete

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<b>20/09 Meeting</b>	<p><u>Strategic Performance and Delivery Reporting Q1 2021-22</u></p> <p>1. The committee requested a written response to their recommendations/ comments from the target setting briefing session held in July 2021</p>	Sharon Godman & Thorsten Dreyer	OSC Chair	Sep 2021	Response sent to OSC Members via email on 29.09.2021
	<p><u>Budget Monitoring Report period 3 2021/22</u></p> <p>1. Analyses on the impact a rise in inflation will have on council contracts</p>	Hitesh Jolapara	OSC Chair	25/10	<p>The current estimate for the annual costs of contract inflation for the General Fund is £3.1m. This includes an allowance for 2% on adult and children’s social care spot placements (for London Living Wage and Ethical Care Charter increases).</p> <p>If inflation was between 3% and 5%, this could increase the cost of inflationary increases to between circa £5m and £8m for the General Fund, depending on contract negotiations and individual uplift clauses in block contracts (which can reference increases to CPI/RPI of specific months).</p> <p>Please note that there are currently price pressures in the market across various service areas which could be experienced as block contracts come up for retender/extension, including pressures relating to increases in wage levels, fuel costs and food costs.</p>
	<p>2. What will the impact be of the NI increase for Health &amp; Social Care have on the Council both as an employer and as purchaser of services?</p>	Hitesh Jolapara	OSC Chair	25/10	<p>The one-off increased cost in 2022-23 of the NI increase (health and social care levy announced 7/9/21) for the Council as an employer is estimated at £1.4m for the General Fund. The government indicated that funding would be provided to public sector bodies for the extra cost burden.</p> <p>Providers of adult social care residential and community-based services could request funding from the Council of</p>

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	<p>3. What assumptions have other authorities made in the MTFS on the use of New House bonus?</p>	<p>Hitesh Jolapara</p>	<p>OSC Chair</p>	<p>25/10</p>	<p>circa £1m for the extra NI cost of providing care (cost for the request estimated as 1.25% NI increase on an assumed 80% staffing component of the £94m annual spend). Similarly, providers of children’s social care may request an estimated circa £0.3m for the extra cost of providing care. It is unclear whether the government will provide funding through Councils to support social care providers directly for the extra NI cost or indirectly through allocation from the income raised from the health and social care levy. Providers of other services purchased by the Council could also request an increase of funding, especially for non-block commissioned services and the extra cost could be included in contract bids by providers for contracts coming up for retender/extension.</p> <p>See appended table for response</p>
	<p>4. A number of assets have lost income or have occurred additional costs. The Committee requested further information on what the council is planning to do with their physical assets and what the costs of these are (either direct costs or income forgone)</p>	<p>Ann Sutcliffe &amp; Vicky Clark</p>	<p>OSC Chair</p>	<p>25/10</p>	<p>Response submitted to OSC Members via email.</p>

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<b>25/10 Meeting</b>	<p><u>Cumulative Impact Assessment Report (Licensing)</u></p> <p>1. To provide a written note for Members on how they raise issues with licensed premises to enable a review</p>	Dave Tolley & Dan Jones	OSC Chair	12/11	<p>“Note for Members will be provided by end of next week (19.11.2021) and will be shared via email.”</p> <p>Sent out to OSC Members via email on 15.11. 2021</p>
	<p>2. <u>Liveable Streets Programme Spotlight</u></p> <p>(a) Following the spotlight, OSC to write to the Mayor with their recommendations/ actions for</p>	Cllr Mohammed Pappu	OSC Chair	11/11	Letter sent out to the Mayor, Cabinet lead and council officers (see appendix 2)
	<p>(b) The Mayor to provide a written response to OSC’s recommendations on Liveable Streets Programme</p>	Mayor’s Office		10/12	See attached Mayors response to OSC recommendations on Liveable Streets Programme (Appendix 4) – received 14.12.2021
<b>22/11 Meeting</b>	<p>1. <u>Waste and Recycling Service</u></p> <p>To provide a written response to the following Recommendations:</p> <p>a. The service must investigate the contamination of waste and recycling (not just in instances where URS vehicles breakdown). This impacts on residents confidence and behaviour and we must better communicate to residents what happens with contaminated waste.</p> <p>b. The service must improve the communications around recycling champions and raise awareness that small electrical items can be disposed at Ideas</p>	Cllr Asma Islam & Dan Jones	OSC Chair	20/12	See attached response from service (Appendix 5)

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	<p>Stores</p> <p>c. The service needs to provide clarity on what additional costs RPs are incurring on waste which is being charged to leaseholders and this needs to be communicated to residents.</p> <p>d. To mitigate the issues caused by URS vehicles on estates, the council must support investment in vehicles to increase capacity. This must consider our growing population and regeneration and therefore needs to consider future need.</p> <p>e. The service must look at the impact of Northumberland Wharf on residents and strengthen the contract with the provider and explore what mitigation is needed.</p> <p>f. Explore how we can improve and expand the enforcement procedures we have in place. This may include publicising court cases where successful so people are aware that severe penalties may be given.</p> <p>g. The recent introduction of food waste recycling into the Bow Quarter has worked well. The council should continue to monitor the implementation at Bow Quarter and explore introducing more food waste recycling in other similar developments across the borough.</p> <p>h. There needs to be a greater focus and monitoring on whether contaminated recycling wheelie bins are being followed up within 24/48 hours to ensure it's been carried out effectively.</p>				
	<p>2. <u>Budget Monitoring Report – Period 6 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021</u></p>	<p>Cllr Candida Ronald, Kevin</p>	<p>OSC chair</p>	<p>03/12</p>	<p>Attached appendix 3 for response</p>

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	Breakdown of the recent Autumn Budget and Spending Review announcement and the projected implications for Tower Hamlets	Bartle & Nisar Visram			
	Leisure Centre review report to be provided to OSC	James Thomas & Judith St John	OSC Chair	03/12	Circulated to OSC Members via email on 03.12.2021
	Provide a written note explaining why the decision to agree the extension of AEG wasn't a key decision	James Thomas & Judith St John	OSC Chair	03/12	Explanation as to why the decision to agree the extension of AEG wasn't a key decision:  <i>The key decision was taken by Cabinet (January 2021) when approval was obtained in order to change the event capacity, maximum number of events per year and to further extend the contract. Cabinet authorised the Divisional Director – Legal Services, after consultation with the Corporate Director for Children and Culture, to execute and enter into all necessary agreements.</i>
13/12 Meeting					
	<p>1. <u>Cabinet Spotlight on Housing</u></p> <p>(a) Data on outcomes from homeless prevention work particularly around employment and housing;</p> <p>(b) Provide details of rough sleeping plan;</p> <p>(c) Provide details of companies who are delivering number of schemes under Council Companies</p>	Ann Sutcliffe, Karen Swift and Rupert Brandon	OSC Chair	27/01/21	<p>(a) The Homelessness Transformation Programme is a programme of service change, and we are in the first 8 months of that. The first year is primarily about internal system change and new ways of working. In 2022/23 and 2023/24 we will hopefully see this impacting on better outcomes for homeless people by way of preventing and relieving more homelessness and also reducing the Council's temporary accommodation costs.</p> <p>Consequently there will be beneficiaries of the programme , i.e. more people who keep their home or find a new one, fewer people in temporary accommodation, etc., in future years rather than in</p>

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	<p>(d) Provide details on the buybacks on postcode, bed size and pricing;</p> <p>(e) Provide stats on Housing Management Panel in terms of No of cases, who sits on the panel, decisions upheld/ not upheld, and case examples of decisions made; and</p> <p>(f) Model (as it stands at the point of information) that supports to HRA Business Plan.</p>				<p>2021/22.</p> <p>On a point of clarity, preventing and relieving homelessness is the Council's statutory duty. The Homelessness Transformation Programme uses service change to improve our statutory outcomes in this area. It is not a programme or a course that people are enrolled on and put through to achieve other discrete and separate ends.</p> <p>(b) The Cabinet report from October 2021 sets out details of the programme:  <a href="https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=117212&amp;PlanId=0&amp;Opt=3#AI124056">https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=117212&amp;PlanId=0&amp;Opt=3#AI124056</a> The Objectives of the programme as per the Report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase 'upstream' early homeless prevention. Upstream prevention includes undertaking mediation with landlords and hosts to help households retain their existing home, minimising disruption to schooling and employment, and enabling households to benefit from ongoing support from local community, personal networks and local service provision. It also reduces the use of costly temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• Increase the use of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) which is often the most viable option, given the acute shortage of social housing or alternative housing options, to help households whose homelessness isn't prevented to settle into a new home suitable to their needs, and keep to a minimum the upheaval and stress that comes with being homelessness and the uncertainty of not having a place to call home.</li> <li>• Improve timely decision-making and case</li> </ul>
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					<p>management to provide clarity and certainty to those who require housing support, achieve better outcomes and minimise unnecessary time spent for applicants in temporary accommodation. At present, there are circa 1000 households in temporary accommodation awaiting a decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the use of the most expensive TA, and increasing income collection, and the rate of move-on from TA. There are at present circa 1800 households in temporary accommodation to whom the Council owes the 'main homeless' duty. 90% of this cohort, through the use of the Council's powers under homelessness legislation, could potentially have the homelessness duty discharged by the offer of suitable accommodation in the PRS.</li> <li>• Examples of some of the service changes being implemented thus far can be found in the Report, paras. 3.33-3.34.</li> </ul> <p>(c) For Mulberry Homes and Seahorse, the answer is zero.</p> <p>(d) See appendix 6</p> <p>(e) See appendix 7</p> <p>(f) Circulated to OSC on 07.02.2022 via email</p>
	<p>(g) OSC chair to write to the Mayor and Cabinet Member asking them to set out any organisations not fulfilling the majority of the 12 Covenant objectives and what actions does the Mayor intend to take including whether he would be referring such</p>	<p>OSC Chair and response by Mayor</p>	<p>OSC</p>	<p>27/01/21</p>	<p>See appendix 8 and 9 for response</p>



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	organisations to ministry for housing, regulator or national housing of federation.				
	<p>2. <u>Youth Justice Plan 2021/22</u></p> <p>(a) Quantify number of children and young people that have gone through the restorative justice approach as part of the rehabilitation.</p>	James Thomas	OSC Chair	27/01/21	<p>It is difficult to quantify children that have gone through the RJ process so provided an overview of the approach below:</p> <p>In terms of children that have gone through RJ (restorative justice) approach, each child/young person who has a victim related offence, whether that be a direct or indirect victim will be encouraged to take part in victim awareness work. This can lead to indirect RJ as a result of introducing and discussing restorative language/approaches in a broad way with children and young people.</p> <p>Over the past year, our Victims/RJ worker had a significant period away from work, which impacted our service delivery on this, however the worker has now returned and improving our RJ offer to victims and children who have committed victim-based offences is a priority going forward.</p> <p>Additionally in line with the rest of the council, YJS staff have received restorative training and deliver this approach when working with each other, children and families.</p> <p>With regards to data, I have attached the most recent data report which gives a more up to date overview of KPI's and additional data.</p> <p>See attached appendix 10</p>
	<p>3. <u>AEG contract extension (follow up)</u></p> <p>In relation to AEG contract - The change of date will have a significant impact on local residents.</p>	James Thomas/ Judith St John	OSC Chair	27/01/21	<p>The original contract, approved by Cabinet in January 2017, included a clause relating to the Event Days.</p>

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	<p>We believe this is a key decision and meets the criteria for key decisions. Can you clarify why this is not deemed a key decision?</p>	<p>&amp; Janet Fasan</p>			<p>It would have not been feasible for bidders (during the tender exercise) to provide/predict Event Days for all contract years. In fact bidders, under their Method Statement, provided an event days plan only for the first year of contract. Therefore, a provision was inserted in the original contract to ensure that the Council is informed on time on the relevant event plan for the year (31<sup>st</sup> October of the year preceding the relevant year of the Contract Period).</p> <p>In essence communication of the dates by AEG does not constitute a contract variation (as event dates were not “fixed” under the contract) and therefore this matter does not meet the threshold for a key decision.</p> <p>It is also noted that further Cabinet approval (January 2021) was obtained in order to change the event capacity, maximum number of events per year and to further extend the contract to accommodate consequences of the pandemic. Approval in this case was sought because these variations constituted a key decision (key decisions are all those decisions which involve major spending, or savings, or which have a significant impact on the local community).</p>			
<p>07/02 Meeting</p>	<p>1. <u>Community Safety Spotlight with Cabinet Member and Borough Commander</u></p> <p>A note to BC on update on improvements to DWO abstractions</p>				<p>See attached appendix 11</p>			
	<p>2. <u>Mayors Spotlight</u></p> <p>The Committee asked for figures on the number of 4-5 large bedroom properties that have been built and delivered to date.</p>				<p>New Build Provision. Breakdown of 4 and 5 beds delivered by RPs and TH, from 2019/20 to now, is as follows:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">RP</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">TH</td> <td style="padding: 5px; width: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>	RP	TH	
RP	TH							

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						4 b	5b	4b	5b	Total
					2019/20	36	0	2	0	38
					2020/21	49	10	9	0	68
					2021/-	45	0	0	0	45
					Total	130	10	11	0	151
21/02 Meeting										
07/03 Meeting										

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### Appendix 1: New Homes Bonus Benchmarking

London Borough	What assumptions have you made in your MTFS on the use of New Homes Bonus (NHB)?	Are you holding any unallocated NHB as a reserve	If yes to question 2, what is the value of that reserve?
1	Currently only legacy, less than £2m	No	n/a
2	Loss of £2m pa (so, -£2m, -£4m, -£6m, -£8m across MTFS; will leave final value at nil	No	n/a
3	Assumption is payment for the fourth year of payments from 2019-20. Not assumed yet that there will be any additional funding in 2022-23 although this assumption will be revised before setting the budget. SR/Budget will make this clearer.	No	n/a
4	Assuming that NHB is no longer available from 2024/25.	No	n/a
5	No assumption of NHB in our 22/23 MTFS. Historically we had quite significant NHB payments which have now all dropped out. We will receive a small amount of legacy NHB + any award this year or returned NHB. We will treat this as one off so are not including in the MTFS	No	n/a
6	Currently use NHB to reduce general revenue costs, which would indirectly include offsetting costs around housing related expenditure. MTFS assumes that NHB will gradually reduce by the legacy payments and we will receive no more payment by 2023/24. However, we have assumed that we will continue to receive funding in future years from the new scheme which the government is currently working on but this will only be a fraction of what we have received in the past, i.e. 1 payment each year compared to 4-6 legacy payments each year	No	n/a
7	Use NHB as part of the total revenue funding.	No	n/a
8	NHB is baked into the base budget and we are forecasting a reduction in line with the model produced at Settlement last year.	No	n/a
9	Nil	allocated previously some NHB monies to	n/a

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		support housing initiatives (earmarked reserve)	
10	Only assuming legacy payments from previous years allocations and no further new funding. Therefore, we have built-in £0.565m in 21/22 which we are due this year and £0.492m for 22/23. Without any further info, we have assumed that the NHB will cease and be wrapped up in the fair funding review for now. Have not always met the threshold to receive NHB in recent years, so have made no assumption for receiving an additional allocation in 23/24 at this stage.	No	n/a
11	21/22 - £5.168m, 22/23 - £7.595m, 23/24 - £9.363m This is being reviewed in light of Housing Ministry changes.	Yes	£11.3k
12	We build out NHB into our MTFs and it just helps out the bottom line. We based the calc on the govt calculator.	No	n/a
13	Does not form a significant element of the financial resources and at this stage have rolled over the current funding as per the expected distribution under the current scheme.	No	n/a
14	Full use in year of receipt to fund revenue spend. To run down to zero in 2023/24 (as 2022/23 is the last year in the NHB calculator)	No	n/a
Tower Hamlets	Given the uncertainty in the amounts to be received and that payments in future will be significantly lower, the Council prudently reduced its reliance on NHB as a funding source in support of its general revenue budget and allocated £10.0m in 2021-22 to the revenue budget with the additional sum of £7.6m received placed into earmarked reserves.	Yes	£40m (31/3/20)

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Appendix 2

17 February 2022

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Liveable Streets Recommendations

Dear Mayor Biggs

Thank you for attending the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on Monday 25 October to discuss the Liveable Streets programme. It was a very productive discussion, and the Committee welcomes further engagement on the programme as we enter a period of review and consider how we can amend the programme to best meet the needs of all our residents.

The Committee encourages the council to really listen and respond to what our residents are telling us and this needs to be an iterative process given the nature of this programme and the wider perception of what other boroughs are doing. We must ensure that as we move through each stage of the programme, we are taking our residents with us and guiding them through what are transformative changes to their habits and behaviours.

We appreciate getting the balance right is always going to be challenging but keeping our residents and other stakeholders informed in a timely manner (not just through consultation) will be critical to the delivering the programme successfully.

It's clear to the Committee that we need to move swiftly to find a resolution to address the concerns our residents have raised, and this programme has become very polarising and damaging for our community. To this end, the Committee strongly suggests the following recommendations to help tackle and progress some of the key issues emerging from the programme.

The Committee recommends the following:

- R1.** That the council investigates the use of capital for a local green transition fund to support delivery of the wider agenda.
- R2.** That the Committee be provided with a copy of the letter from the Chief Executive of London Ambulance Service and a response to this in writing to understand how the issues have been addressed.
- R3.** That the council establish a mechanism for speedy and transparent responses to unforeseen negative impacts of the schemes when these are brought to our attention by residents and businesses.
- R4.** That the council establish a reporting facility for persistent speeding and provide a quick way for residents to report hotspots
- R5.** That the council establish a policy on resident exemptions so that future schemes and those currently being designed can take this into account. Need to be clear on what this means for residents in

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- car free developments.
- R6.** That the council open an ongoing, borough wide, listening platform (outside of specific consultations) so there is an ongoing process for residents to communicate with the council.
- R7.** That the council increase cycle parking provision in the borough and provide the committee with a note in writing with details how this will be delivered.

Thank you for consideration of the Committee's recommendations. We would be grateful if you can provide us with a written response which details how the recommendations will be addressed.

Yours Sincerely

**Cllr Mohammed Pappu**

Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Mohammed.Pappu@towerhamlets.gov.uk

### Appendix 3

**Briefing note:** MTFS 2022 25 further update and future outlook

**Date:** 1 December 2021

**Author:** Nisar Visram, Director Finance, Procurement and Audit (Deputy s151 Officer)

## **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update Summary**

This briefing note is designed to bring members up to date following the Spending Review 2021, announced by the Chancellor on 27 October, which set out departmental budgets up to 2024-25.

The Spending Review stated that departments would receive an increase in real terms funding over the three-year period 2022-23 to 2024-25. Core Spending Power (CSP) for local authorities is estimated to increase by an average of 3% in real terms each year over the period, which will **include** the proposed investment in Adult Social Care reform (including funding the Care Cap).

The Government Spending Power calculation assumes local authorities will enact the maximum available increases for Council Tax and the ASC Precept. The Spending Review has suggested a referendum level of 2% for Council Tax increases and an ASC Precept of 1% to be levied in each of the three years, however this will be confirmed in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (LG

The fair funding review and the business rates reset were not mentioned in the Spending Review so are likely to be delayed and the impact on the income for the Council is, therefore, unclear.

The provisional LGFS is expected to be received in mid-December and this will give a clearer view of the distribution of funding for local government and for individual local authorities. The Council's MTFS will be updated following receipt of the provisional LGFS.

The Council's position from the 2021-24 approved MTFS was a budget gap of **£19.1m** for 2022-23, which reduced to **£11m** after the planned usage of **£8.2m** from one-off reserves (we are already using £1.3m of our reserves to balance 2021-22).

The Council's MTFS funding assumptions have improved in three main areas:

- Business Rates - the most recent intelligence continues to suggest that the planned Business Rates reset is more likely than not to be delayed by a further year from 2022-23 to 2023-24. (£14.5m one off benefit in 22-23). This is a short term gain that helps next year but not the total MTFS, as the reset is just slipping a year.
- Revenue Support Grant – a net forecast increase to include assumed recycling of New Homes Bonus funding (replacing the previous grant). (£2.8m in 22-23 and £4.8m in 23-24). We have had no confirmation of what the Government intends to do with New Homes Bonus – a consultation was completed in early 2021 and it is forecast that funding could be repurposed as part of the settlement.
- Council Tax – property growth forecast to be 3.5% in 22-23 (rather than 3% originally budgeted) and estimated reduction in LCTRS claimants in future years (following the increase in 20-21 and 21-22 due to the pandemic). (£0.7m in 22-23 and £1.4m in 23-24)

The detailed settlement will be published in mid to late December 2021 and this will outline specifically the funding the council will receive. There is a risk that the Government may vary the distribution of funding as part of its levelling up agenda, with potentially sums being redistributed out of London.

There are unavoidable growth pressures and savings delays/write off currently under review, risks of ongoing costs from the pandemic and from the wider economy which provide a backdrop of uncertainty and caution when setting our Medium-Term Financial Strategy going forward. Further details on these items are outlined below.

## **Review of Savings**

The Council is not introducing new savings for 22-23, however the savings already approved by Council would need to be delivered or the budget gap would increase (and alternative savings would



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need to be found). Council has previously approved savings totalling £19.5m in 21-22, £9.2m in 22-23 and £7.2m in 23-24.

Officers have carried out a review of existing savings plans to identify savings that could be at risk of delivery or require more time to deliver. This review has identified £2.3m of savings which may be undeliverable and £2.4m of savings which may need to be re-profiled to later years, taking into account the impact of the pandemic on greater commercialisation opportunities (including property rentals), changes to the Idea Store Strategy following stakeholder consultation, and to allow time for service redesign and system improvements in HR and legal services.

### **Review of growth and inflation requirements**

There remain significant risks around the impact of inflation on the council's budgets. The MTFS currently allows for 2% pay inflation (£3.8m per annum) and 2% non-pay inflation (£3.1m per annum). Current inflation is running comparatively higher than recent years (CPI 3.1% & RPI 4.9% in September 2021). At present, above target inflation is expected to be temporary and CPI is expected to return to around the 2% target in the medium term.

Officers are currently also reviewing growth pressures and any growth requests approved would increase the level of planned use of reserves for 2022-23, if compensatory savings are not to be found, and increase the budget gap for future years.

### **Budget Forecast and Covid-19**

The Council's budget monitor is forecasting almost to budget; however this is after the application of £19.6m in one off COVID grant funding to meet pandemic related pressures in year. Although many of the costs are one off in nature, there are potentially ongoing impacts of the pandemic on Care services, temporary accommodation, lower economic activity, and shortfalls in income collection. The full ongoing impact of these costs upon the council's finances have yet to be fully ascertained.

### **Council Tax**

The MTFS assumes a Council Tax increase of 1.99% in each of the next three years 2022-23 to 2024-25, in line with the current expectation of the government's referendum level (and therefore the Core Spending Power calculation for local government funding). The Government set out in the spending review that it expects councils to increase Council Tax by 1.99% and to levy an additional 1% for the Adult Social Care Precept.

The 1.99% increase provides extra income of £2.424m (22-23), £2.760m (23-24) and £3.092m (24-25).

A Band D council taxpayer in Tower Hamlets currently pays £1,476.92 per annum including the GLA element (£1,113.26 Council element and £363.66 GLA element). Each 1% increase in Council Tax, would add approximately 21p extra a week (£11.13 per year) for a Band D property (excluding any increases that could come from the GLA element). This is before any discounts, reliefs or benefits. Those on low incomes would still receive support through the LCTRS, including 100% relief for those on the lowest incomes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has reduced the collection rate and it has increased significantly those claiming benefits including through the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). As at the end of September 2021, the Council had collected 45.8% of Council Tax compared to 46.5% over the same period in 2020, with collection levels lower than last year and pre-pandemic levels. The cost of the LCTRS scheme rose from £26.7m in 2019-20 to £31.6m in 2020-21. The level of claimants has remained at the increased pandemic level to date (estimated £33.2m cost in 2021-22).

### **Adult Social Care (ASC) Precept**

The latest iteration of our MTFS assumes an Adult Social Care (ASC) Precept of 1% for each of the next three years and that this will be allocated to support ASC demographic pressures. The LGFS will confirm both the referendum level for Council Tax increases and the maximum level of the ASC

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Precept. At 1%, the ASC Precept provides extra income of £1.212m (22-23), £1.380m (23-24) and £1.546m (24-25) which is a contribution towards the estimated ASC demographic pressures of circa £5m per annum based on our latest understanding of population and care need trends.

## **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

Local authorities are permitted to increase housing rents by a maximum of CPI + 1%. Any rent increase is based on the September CPI figure which has now been announced as 3.1%. The Council will need to consider the increase for 2022-23.

Similarly, tenanted service charges are normally subject to an inflationary increase. A decision will need to be taken on rental increases with consideration of the sustainability of the HRA business plan going forward.

## **Fees and Charges**

The MTFS currently assumes an increase of £420k for 2022-23 which contributes towards the budget gap. Charges are either statutory or discretionary and broadly aim to cover costs.

Inflation from September (CPI 3.1% & RPI 4.9%) have been utilised as a guide for setting charges, together with other factors such as service demand, the cost of providing services, benchmarking with other Councils and the impact on residents. Some figures are rounded for practical purposes.

## **Budget consultation**

The Budget Consultation closed on 15 November 2021. The results will be presented to Cabinet on 15 December. Changes can then be made to the Budget Report prior to its presentation to Cabinet in January 2022.

## **Budget setting timetable**

### **Budget Consultation Results - Cabinet 15 December 2021**

### **Budget Report 2022-23 and MTFS 2022-25 - Cabinet 5 January 2022**

- Including Capital, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Budget (DSB)
- Agreement of Council Tax Base calculation for 2022-23. Delegation will be requested from Cabinet for the S151 Officer to agree future year's calculations.

### **Fees and Charges Report - Cabinet 5 January 2022**

- Agreement of Fees & Charges (£420k saving already 'baked in' to the approved 2022-23 budget)

### **Budget Report 2022-23 and MTFS 2022-25 - Cabinet 26 January 2022**

- Including Capital, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Budget (DSB)

## **Full Council March 2022**

- Budget Report 2022-23 and MTFS 2022-25 (including Capital, HRA and DSB)
- Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Investment Strategy Report and Capital Strategy Report for 2022-23

# Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

## Appendix 4

Mayor's response to OSC Recommendations on Liveable Streets Programme

**R1. That the council investigates the use of capital for a local green transition fund to support delivery of the wider agenda.**

This is beyond the scope of the Liveable Streets project. The delivery of the wider agenda is delivered through the council's various strategies including the Net Zero Carbon Plan, Transport Strategy, Green Grid Strategy. These will all have their associated funding streams which collectively support our local green transition.

**R2. That the Committee be provided with a copy of the letter from the Chief Executive of London Ambulance Service and a response to this in writing to understand how the issues have been addressed.**

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

This is attached. No formal response was given, but the Council set up regular meetings where plans and proposals were presented to officers representing all the emergency services. This has meant continual engagement and where concerns have been raised, amendments have been made to the address those concerns.

### **R3. That the council establish a mechanism for speedy and transparent responses to unforeseen negative impacts of the schemes when these are brought to our attention by residents and businesses.**

Much of the scheme is implemented through experimental traffic orders and this enables the council to make changes in a short space of time when small scale amendments are required. For larger scales changes, these will need to adhere to the council's governance procedures. Where significant changes are required, these will be subject to the formal decision-making requirements. This was the case with the recent Brick Lane review.

From the start of the project, the team have been contactable through a dedicated email ([Liveablestreets@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Liveablestreets@towerhamlets.gov.uk)). This has allowed us to respond to the concerns of residents and businesses. We will look into how this can be improved and responses that be responded to quicker.

We are seeking reduce reliance on digital channels of input and where we are making changes, we will seek to establish more face-to-face channels of communications. For our recent Bethnal Green review we arranged three drop in sessions in the scheme area to address concerns of digital exclusion.

### **R4. That the council establish a reporting facility for persistent speeding and provide a quick way for residents to report hotspots**

This is beyond the scope of the Liveable Streets project.

If residents witness a motorist driving carelessly or dangerously – putting themselves, passengers and other motorists at risk of an accident – and they feel implored to do something about it, they can phone the non-emergency police number by calling 101.

The UK's Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) also keeps tabs on drivers registered in the UK. If the Agency finds that someone has been driving erratically and endangering others on the road, the DVLA can suspend or put points onto the driver's license. Residents can contact DVLA on 0844 453 0118.

### **R5. That the council establish a policy on resident exemptions so that future schemes and those currently being designed can take this into account. Need to be clear on what this means for residents in car free developments.**


Officers are developing a resident exemption policy which will apply to closures in some locations. Its will be clear in its implications for all residents including those living in car-free developments

Ref	Recommendations	Officer	Response
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## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

1.	The service must investigate the contamination of waste and recycling (not just in instances where URS vehicles breakdown). This impacts on residents confidence and behaviour and we must better communicate to residents what happens with contaminated waste.	Oli Kapopo	<p>This is being discussed and staff have been reminded that collections should be segregated. This will be an area we will continue to highlight on periodically to ensure that the practice is curbed.</p> <p>Waste Operations will work closely with colleagues in the Waste Improvement and Communications Teams to ensure that the message on what happens to contaminated waste is clear.</p>
2.	The service must improve the communications around recycling champions and raise awareness that small electrical items can be disposed at Ideas Stores	Fiona Heyland	<p><b>Recycling Champions</b>  The recycling champions scheme is a new scheme which began in October 2021. To initiate the scheme a webpage was designed, and an e-form created for residents to complete in order to sign up to become a recycling champion.  The scheme has been promoted internally via Yammer, in order to encourage staff who also live in the borough to sign up.</p> <p>A recycling article is currently being developed for the upcoming edition of Our East End and we have asked for the recycling champions scheme to mentioned in the article and the link to the webpage given.</p> <p>We will also be promoting the scheme via social media</p> <p>We have been discussing with the comms team about the opportunity to have a feature in Our East End that would focus on an individual who has signed up to become a champion. So far we have not had an individual agree to take part but we will continue to explore this opportunity</p> <p>In the new year we would be looking to arrange a site visit for the first cohort of champions to visit the Bywaters MRF.</p> <p><b>Small Electrical Items (Small WEEE)</b></p> <p>Disposal points for small WEEE is advertised on the council website, see screen shot below:</p>

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

			<p><b>Electrical items:</b></p> <p>Any item that takes batteries, has a plug, needs charging or has a crossed out wheelite bin can be recycled.</p> <p>Small portable <b>items</b> such as kettles, small toasters and mixers, cameras, hairdryers, irons, electric toothbrushes, toys, cables, and chargers can be recycled at <a href="#">Idea Stores, Bethnal Green and Cubitt Town Libraries</a> and the <a href="#">Northumberland Wharf Reuse and Recycling Centre</a>.</p> <p>Medium and large items including fridges, freezers, washing machines, tumble dryers, TV's, vacuum cleaners, home printers, microwaves, computers, large food processors, can be taken to the <a href="#">Northumberland Wharf Reuse and Recycling Centre</a>. Larger electricals items can also be collected by the bulky waste collection service.</p> <p>In addition to this we have asked the comms team to include information on social media during the Christmas period.</p> <p>The comms team are currently helping us to develop some graphic posts for social media and we will be looking to include a graphic on disposing of small WEEE for use in the future.</p> 
3.	The service needs to provide clarity on what additional costs RPs are incurring on waste which is being charged to leaseholders and this needs to be communicated to residents.	Oli Kapopo	We have asked RPs to come back to us with costs that they feel they incurred unjustifiably. This was communicated to them by Dan Jones, Director for Public Realm and the quarterly Tower Hamlets Housing Forum meeting held on 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2021. No RP has come forward so far.
4.	To mitigate the issues caused by URS vehicles on estates, the council must support investment in vehicles to increase capacity. This must consider our growing population and regeneration and therefore needs to consider future	Richard Williams	We have committed to additional investment in URS vehicles with our newest vehicle being delivered in January 2022 and one re-furbished vehicle providing a reliable spare at the end of Dec 2021. This will provide 4 URS vehicles in the fleet from Jan 2022 and improve our ability to deliver a reliable service. We will also complete route optimisation work in 2022 to understand the impact of new developments using URS and to produce more efficient future collection routes. An additional new vehicle is expected to be purchased in 2022 to support this growth.

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

	need.		
5.	The service must look at the impact of Northumberland Wharf on residents and strengthen the contract with the provider and explore what mitigation is needed.	Fiona Heyland	<p>Northumberland Wharf waste transfer station and RRC are the only waste facilities that the council owns and both are necessary for supporting the provision of services that discharge the council's statutory duties as a waste collection and disposal authority. The use of the waste transfer station has allowed the council to move away from landfilling residual waste to energy from waste and allows the residual waste to be transferred via river to the disposal facility, thus reducing road transport.</p> <p>The council is required by legislation to provide a public facility for residents to be able to dispose of waste and recycling, which they have otherwise not been able to dispose of through the waste and recycling collection services. The RRC at Northumberland Wharf allows the council to discharge this duty.</p> <p>Cory Environmental were required under the property leases and contract to obtain the relevant waste permits from the Environment Agency and the Environment Agency now monitors compliance on a regular basis. Cory has an odour suppression system in place in the waste transfer station and undertake an extensive daily cleaning regime. The waste operations team also undertake regular cleaning of Yabsley Street to help mitigate the impacts on the local area.</p> <p>Scrutiny Members will be aware that we are delivering an extensive programme of education and behaviour change activities to encourage residents to look to reuse and recycle more of their waste in order that our residual waste tonnages can be reduced. To support the behaviour change programme we will also be working on a 3 year project to roll out improvements to the recycling infrastructure at blocks of flats and estates.</p>
6.	Explore how we can improve and expand the enforcement procedures we have in place. This may include publicising court cases where successful so people are aware that severe penalties may be given.	Azizul Goni	<p>We have issued 480 Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping in the last 12 months, with a 64% payment rate.</p> <p>These £400 FPN's give an offender the opportunity to admit committing the offence, to pay the fine and avoid prosecution. If you disagree that you have committed an offence, you can decide not to pay the Fixed Penalty and the matter will then be decided by a Court.</p> <p>We have 4 cases submitted to the courts so far, with 17 cases being prepared for prosecution. We are working to improve the efficiency of our enforcement procedures and ensure that results of prosecutions are publicised.</p> <p>The aim of our publicity will be to raise awareness that severe penalties may be given by the courts. That fly tippers could face a maximum penalty of £50,000 and 5 years in prison. That we have zero tolerance for those that dump waste illegally and will always take action.</p>



## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

			Our Environmental Services Officers are working on improved enforcement processes. To make better use of CCTV and mobile CCTV to detect and provide evidence of fly tipping. To use Body Cams to support evidence gathering. To introduce a new enforcement IT system that will enable improved data entry and FPN processing, including an improved facility to pay FPNs online.
7.	The recent introduction of food waste recycling into the Bow Quarter has worked well. The council should continue to monitor the implementation at Bow Quarter and explore introducing more food waste recycling in other similar developments across the borough.	Fiona Heyland	<p>A monitoring regime for the new flats food waste pilot is being implemented in order that we can work with the two estates to ensure the pilot runs smoothly. We will be monitoring the amount of food waste that is being placed out for collection (fill level of the communal bins), checking the quality, monitoring the collections and checking the condition of the bins to help us learn lessons and plan for a wider roll out of food waste collections in line with the requirements that we are expecting Government to set for mandatory separate food waste collections.</p> <p>Until such time as we are able to implement the expansion programme, we will continue to work with blocks and estates who have an interest in setting up a community composting scheme and will encourage residents to reduce food waste through national campaigns such as “Love Food Hate Waste”</p>
8.	There needs to be a greater focus and monitoring on whether contaminated recycling wheelie bins are being followed up within 24/48 hours to ensure it's been carried out effectively.	Oli Kapopo	The service has a service standard to ensure that bins that are deemed contaminated are collected within 24 hours of reporting. As contamination is self-reporting by crews, we have asked that Environmental Managers to be informed of highly contaminated bins - i.e. with builder's rubble etc so that enforcement action can be taken as well. At present we are working with Registered Housing Providers with a view that their caretakers can “skim” off visible contaminants such as black bags. Crews can then collect all bins that have no visible contamination. Where crews are able to remove contaminants themselves and place them in nearby refuse bins, this is also encouraged. Better monitoring of contamination reports from back-office staff will also improve with the introduction of a new robust back-office team that has been created as part of the restructure. This team takes effect on 4 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 and their role will be to monitor ‘workflow’ on the waste management database called Whitespace. This will improve efficiency and improve response times as actions will be logged, monitored and performance managed.

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

### Appendix 6

Acquisitions	Former Council RTB	Poplar HARCA	Out of Borough	Total
<b>Acquisitions per source</b>	173	223	24	420
<b>Cost of Properties</b>	£75,245,000	£74,485,848	£6,615,000	£156,345,848
<b>Average Cost per Property</b>	£435,000	£334,017	£276,000	£372,252
<b>1 Bed</b>	34	95	6	
<b>2 Beds</b>	85	83	12	
<b>3 Beds</b>	48	38	6	
<b>4 Beds</b>	4	1	0	
<b>5+ Beds</b>	2	6	0	
<b>Post Codes</b>	<b>E14=33</b>	<b>E3=109</b>	<b>CR2=1; DA17=4</b>	
	<b>E2=42</b>	<b>E14=114</b>	<b>DA8=4; DN1=1</b>	
	<b>E1W=5</b>		<b>N17=2; SE13=2</b>	
	<b>E3=12</b>		<b>SE8=1; SE28=3</b>	
	<b>E1=81</b>		<b>SE6=5; SE7=1</b>	

# Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

## Appendix 7

### **Tower Hamlets Housing Management Panel**

This is a panel of at least three officers, one of whom will be a manager. The Panel will make all decisions on requests for discretionary additional priority unless the case is considered an emergency. In these circumstances a decision can be made by a senior manager before a meeting of the Panel. Panel members are drawn from across Tower Hamlets Common Register partnership. Although three members are required for the Panel to be quorate, there are usually four or five core panel members in attendance subject to availability.

Core members of the panel are

Team Manager, Assessment & Attainment, Housing Option Service

Area Housing Manager, Tower Hamlets Homes

Lettings Manager, East End Homes

Home Services Manager, Southern Housing Group

ASB Community Co-ordinator, LBTH Community Safety Team

The panel meets on the first working Monday of each month.

During the three calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021 a total of 281 individual referrals were made to panel. 80 of these were refused. 11 of these referrals were reviews of previous decisions.

The applications that were awarded priority fell under the following categories

DV 56

ASB 40

Disrepair 20

Safeguarding 3

Children's Services 11

Discretionary Grant of new tenancy 70 Also referred to as 'Second Successions'

Trauma after incident 1

## Appendix 8

Executive Mayor's Office

Tel 020 7364 4000  
mayor@towerhamlets.gov.uk  
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

# Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

Cllr Mohammed Pappu  
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 February 2022

Dear Cllr Pappu

## **Tower Hamlets Housing Covenant**

Thank you for your scrutiny work into this important topic for our residents. I appreciate the work you have done.

Most boroughs do not have a forum of this nature and I'm pleased that we have this covenant as a way to try and improve things for our residents. We value this spirit of co-operation. We of course have a single housing register through the co-operation with most Registered Providers in Tower Hamlets, and membership of this is one of the key asks in the charter.

I acknowledge the frustration implicit in your letter and hear it often from residents too. Strangely, perhaps, the charter is I understand one of the more comprehensive agreements between a council and its Registered Providers. Maybe the fact that this is the case illustrates the problem. It is of course a voluntary agreement.

As a council our powers of oversight or for other actions are quite limited and as Mayor, I find this frustrating. I know there has been recent work in Parliament to highlight tenant and leaseholder voices and championing reform to improve regulation, clearly driven by an unease beyond just Tower Hamlets.

Due to government policies, including crucially the current funding framework – perhaps more often better described as a lack of funding – Registered Providers have of course had to diversify their operations and act much more commercially, but we must ensure they remain committed to provide good quality homes for people. There is always more we can try and do despite the limited levers of control we as a local council have, and I am happy to hear your ideas.

The way Registered Social Landlords have developed from, in many cases, quite local organisations, either growing themselves and/or through initial stock transfers through mergers has in some cases made tenants feel removed from their landlord. Locally a lot of Registered Social Landlords do great work but some are of course better than others and we want to drive up standards for all.

As Mayor when I meet with their Chief Executives, and through my casework, I do raise issues of poor service with Registered Social Landlords.


I attach an officer note outlining more information on the work of the covenant.

I am of course happy to continue to work with OSC and engage with you on this important issue

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

and see how we can continue to improve things. The relationship with our social landlords is of course important to us and must be progressed if at all possible in a spirit of partnership. I know that members will broadly recognise this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Biggs', written in a cursive style.

**Mayor John Biggs**

**Appendix 9****BRIEFING NOTE**

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**Title: THHF and Housing Covenant****Date: 17/01/2022**

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**1. Introduction and background**

1. The purpose of this briefing note is to provide information on the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) Housing Covenant developed by its members in 2016, and the role of the signatories and the council in ensuring the parties honour the terms contained within it.
2. The Covenant was an attempt by the Partnership to set out a formal agreement between the forum members, as well as a declaration for stakeholders to provide a baseline of service provision that could be expected in the borough irrespective of the landlord providing it.
3. The Consumer Standards developed and monitored by the Regulator of Social Housing provided the blueprint for the evolution of the Housing Covenant.

**2. THHF Forum**

1. The Tower Hamlets Housing Forum remains an exemplary forum of one of which other boroughs endeavour to create yet often failed. The Forum includes 14 membered registered Social Landlords, THH and council representatives headed by an Executive Group and eight supporting subgroups listed as follows:
  - Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Group
  - Asset Management
  - Benchmarking
  - Common Housing Register
  - Community Involvement Network
  - Development
  - Housing management
  - Public Realm
2. The Landlords have continued to work tirelessly, especially during the pandemic, to offer quality services to residents that deliver on the provisions within the Housing Covenant. For example, maintaining and emergency repairs service during the height of lockdown and where workforce and materials allowed, conducting regulatory fire and Gas safety inspections within health and safety guidelines.
3. The following paragraphs set out activities undertaken by the partnership and how they support the aspirations within the covenant.

**3. Inclusive / partnership working.**

1. The Registered Providers have worked closely with Public Health colleagues and the Lead Members for Housing to develop joint communications during the Pandemic, reinforcing their commitment to maintaining homes, supporting the vulnerable and information sharing. The impact of the Pandemic on residents and how each Provider was delivering on their service commitments has been an ongoing area of discussion for the Executive Group.

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

Approaches to service delivery are constantly being refined as a result. E.g., the provision of enhanced financial and debt advice, welfare phone calls, shopping trips for residents and food parcel/hot meals and vaccine deliveries.

2. RP's worked with East End Community Foundation and the council to work collectively at bringing broadband to more families. Working with local schools in Poplar and around Tower Hamlets helped with placing the devices with families who really needed help. Families were able to get practical advice on how to use the device from schools over 200 families in Poplar were supported because of this initiative. In addition, 10% of families were also able to obtain free broadband licenses for a year.
  3. Each landlord has, and actively encourages the formation of Residents Groups and Associations although they remain open to individual engagement through informal and formal methods and the increased use of digital technology has enabled housing providers to engage a much wider scope of residents and tailor services accordingly to achieve better value for money.
- 4. Community work / employment encouragement of activity.**
1. While the above demonstrates strong partnership and community work, THHF continues to encourage support and upskill residents via the Community Involvement Network and provide virtual training programmes for residents during the lockdown.
  2. The joint training programmes have seen a huge spike in interest for accredited courses such as social enterprise supporting people to start their own business. The subgroup alongside WorkPath has engaged with the CVS network to establish a shared partnership approach to boroughwide community priorities.
  3. The subgroup has been exploring avenues to provide activities for the wider community such as "Play Streets" and encourages older residents to partake in physical activity such as walking football. The exploration of new green spaces for food growing to support community cohesion and improve the living environment remain high on the group's agenda.
- 5. ASB / crime intervention.**
1. During the year, the ASB subgroup Strategy group has worked to strengthen the partnerships response to managing Anti-Social Behaviour, and particularly the impact of Covid-19 on changes to patterns of behaviour and crime "hot spots" In addition the group has contributed to the council's Substance Misuse Strategy 2020-25, reviewed the impact of the Nitrous Oxide Public Space Protection Order, and developed multi-landlord approaches to tackling knife crime with the support of the Metropolitan Police.
  2. All members of the ASB subgroup are working to refine the processes and delivery of responses to the LBTH "Community Trigger" that reviews ASB cases and their outcomes to ensure victims are satisfied with how their ASB complaints have been handled.
  3. In addition, the group is working with Swan Housing to support a project called "Street Doctors" helping to train young people with lifesaving medical skills on how to treat and react in the event of a stabbing incident.
- 6. The need for housing supply and demand.**
1. Members of THHF are also members of the Common Housing Register helping to deliver housing and manage the high demand for housing within the borough.
  2. In the past year the group has supported the delivery of 960 affordable homes and 146 new wheelchair accessible homes under Project 120 which has been highly successful in supporting inclusivity for residents that would otherwise be unlikely to move.
  3. The Common Housing Register subgroup lead training for all partners on new Allocations Policy provisions and were instrumental in developing the borough's Local Lettings Plan and Overcrowding Reduction Strategy.
- 7. Members enquires and Benchmarking standards**

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

1. As part of the benchmarking subgroup, RPs continue to submit 16 quarterly KPI's (voluntarily) with a view to monitoring performance and share good practise as well as highlight issues where performance needs to be remedied.
2. Throughout the last four quarters RP's have continued to strive for better and improved figures in various aspects of their service delivery. For example, with regards to Member enquiries and repairs, in quarter Two 8 out of 14 RP's had 23 or less ME's for that specific quarter. In relation to resident repair satisfaction RP's have on average achieved 86% on residents being satisfied with the repairs undertaken. Two RP's average relet time reduced from 47 days to 21 and another RP's response to complaints within time improved from 71% to 89% In the same quarter.
3. This is not to say there are no areas for improvement, alive to the fact that there remains some dissatisfaction with ME response rates, THHF partners continue to work alongside the council to ensure member enquiries are dealt with robustly and recently held meetings with senior officers, to devise a process for better accountability. Furthermore, more clarity will be implemented to establish what constitutes as an ME FOI or complaint.
4. In order to drive improvement, the Benchmarking subgroup requests high performing RP's present and share methods which have proven to be successful within subgroup meetings. This in turn helps other RP's follow suit and adopt similar or trial new methods as a result of shared learning. The subgroup currently provides KPI data to the Housing Regen Overview Scrutiny Committee Meeting bimonthly with RPs in attendance and performing presentations upon request.

### **8. Council's stance with THHF / covenant and RP's**

1. From the areas outlined above, the THHF and related sub-groups have in place an operational framework which actively supports the TH Housing Covenant. The THHF Executive and subgroups set actions for all stakeholders to deliver on council and partnership aspirations far beyond housing.
2. Whilst the partnership is unique, it is indeed voluntary and thrives on housing partners coming together to share good practise and collaborate to identify new ways of working to deliver outcomes for residents. In being a voluntary partnership to deliver the Housing Covenant via positive relationships to support practise and improvement, the council does not hold regulatory authority over the RP's, this is the responsibility is of the Housing Regulator.

### **9. Regulator of Social Housing and next steps**

1. The Regulator of Social Housing monitors Registered Providers of Social Housing to promote a viable, efficient and well governed social Housing Sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs.
2. The objectives of the regulator are set out in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 (as amended) and includes Economic Standards to assure value for money is achieved to maintain lender confidence and protect the taxpayer. Of equal importance, the regulator sets Consumer Standards and has the power to step in and take action against any Social Landlord where they have breached a Consumer Standard and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants.
3. These Consumer Standards place an obligation on Social Landlords to provide well managed, quality homes where residents have an appropriate degree of choice and protection; opportunities to be engaged in the management of their homes and contribute to the environmental, economic and social well-being of the areas in which they live. They also place a duty on Social Landlords to provide opportunities for tenants to hold their landlords to account. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>
4. While the Social Housing Regulator has the legislative power to hold housing provide to account rather than the council, the council does seek to build on this, positively encouraging opportunities to improve on the outcomes delivered by housing providers for residents and identify areas for improvement.



## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

5. Housing providers are equally keen to work with the council on identifying the opportunities, demonstrated by their attendance to the Housing and Regen Scrutiny Committee to hear any concerns which residents have in relation to performance. As part of this relationship with the committee the council and the housing forum would be keen to explore any particular issues and ensure they are included in the 2022/23 work programme for the committee.

### Appendix 11

Borough Commander Marcus Barnett  
Bethnal Green Police Station  
12 Victoria Park Square  
London  
E2 9NZ

17 February 2022

17 February 2022

Reference: Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Community Safety Spotlight

Dear Marcus,

On behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I want to express our thanks for your attendance and participation with the Community Safety spotlight session that took place on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22

The Committee felt that this was a productive discussion, one that provided a good overview of local policing priorities and insights to the work that the BCU and council's community safety team deliver on.

Whilst we welcome your commitment to ensure there is on-going engagement with the Committee, you will note from the discussion that the Committee highlighted a number of areas of concern including:

- Women's safety particularly on the night-time economy and use of public transport;
- Roman Road Market – Safety concerns after dark where it's deserted and how we reclaim those public spaces for example having a more consistent presence to provide reassurance to women and local residents.
- The behaviour and culture of the Charing Cross police and reassurance on the internal actions to ensure this is rooted out in Tower Hamlets.
- Level of community confidence on the treatment of sexual offences when they are reported and why it is not leading to more convictions.
- IICSA findings and concerns outlined in the report that no planning on accessibility to child sexual exploitation services for ethnic minority communities were in place.
- Findings of child sexual exploitation by organised networks report outlining police's level of engagement with children and making sure new recruits have the right experience and skill set to tackle this;
- Young people's involvement in scrutiny of the police in south of the borough and whether this could be replicated in other parts of the borough; and
- Partnership working outside of the borough to correlate intelligence on serious youth violence from gangs, county lines and exploitation.

The Committee also sought more detail on the data for weapons possession, breakdown of the dangerous weapon and level young people scrutiny engagement via your neighbourhood teams.

You will also recall from the previous OSC spotlight meeting on Borough Commander held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021, that the Committee raised concerns on the prolonged absences of DWO's to accommodate other policing activities and the impact this was having on local community safety priorities. The Committee requests for a written note to be provided on how this situation has improved.

I would be grateful if you provide your response by Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022 so that I can update the Committee, as our last OSC meeting is on the Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Yours Sincerely,

Cllr Mohammed Pappu  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
[Mohammed.Pappu@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Mohammed.Pappu@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## Scrutiny Action Log 2021-22