

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT 5.37 P.M. ON MONDAY, 27 MARCH 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Musthak Ahmed	
Councillor Abdul Mannan	
Councillor Maisha Begum	
Councillor Marc Francis	
Councillor Asma Islam	
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Health and Adults
Councillor Sabina Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Resources and Finance
Councillor Abdul Malik	Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety

Other Members Present in Person:

Councillor Saied Ahmed

Co-optees Present in Person:

Jahid Ahmed
Halima Islam

Officers Present in Person:

Stephen Halsey	(Interim Chief Executive)
Ann Corbett	(Director of Community Safety)
Sharon Godman	(Director Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Dan Jones	(Director of Public Realm)
David Tolley	(Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards)
Joseph Leach	(Data Analytics, Business Intelligence and Performance Lead)
Stephen Bramah	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Improvement)
Abdul Khan	(Service Manager (Housing))
Daniel Kerr	(Senior Strategy and Policy Officer)
Thomas French	(Democratic Services Officer (Committees))

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Nisar Visram	(Director of Finance Audit and Procurement)
Karen Swift	(Director of Housing)
Muhammad Islam	(Pollution Team Leader (Public Realm))
Riad Akbur	(Service Manager (Housing))

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND OTHER INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were received at the meeting.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

Members requested an update on the Gill Street application.

The Chair confirmed that a response from the borough commander has been requested on last committee meeting and officers will circulate this offline to members and include in next month's action log update when it is received.

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 January 2023 and 20 February 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Strategic Plan Q3 Performance

The Strategic Plan Q3 Performance was presented by Stephen Halsey, Interim Chief Executive, Stephen Bramah, Head of Corporate Strategy, and Improvement, Joseph Leach, Data Analytics, Business Intelligence and Performance Lead.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

4.2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 Quarter 3

The Budget Monitoring 2022/23 Quarter 3 was presented by Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living and Nisar Visram, Director of Finance Audit and Procurement.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- Members raised concern about the timelines of budget savings.
- What are the drivers behind the increase in the year to end actuals?
Officers confirmed they would come back in writing with an answer.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

5. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

5.1 Climate Emergency

A presentation on the Climate Emergency and *A Cleaner and Greener Future for Tower Hamlets* was presented by Dan Jones, Director of the Public Realm and Abdul Khan, Service Manager, Housing.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- What planning is in place to ensure that all departments are working towards Net Zero Carbon? Officers reported on the staff working group, which has staff from across the council. More can be done to ensure staff are more aware of the actions they can take, and a training programme is being discussed.
- What reporting is in place to ensure Cabinet and this committee will be informed of performance reporting? Officers confirmed that quarterly reporting could come to the committee, as requested.
- What data collection has been done to understand overheating in council homes? Officers confirmed they will return to the committee on overheating in council homes.
- Is the council communications campaign strong enough with residents to ensure they are aware of the support they could receive for cost of energy? And the action the council is taking around climate change? Officers confirmed that coming strategy around communications around climate, including tendering a new contract to help the council in this way.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation.

5.2 Improving Air Quality in Tower Hamlets

Improving Air Quality in Tower Hamlets was presented by Dan Jones, Director of the Public Realm, and Dave Tolley, Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- What role will low traffic neighbourhoods have on the air quality action plan? Will funding be a concern? Officers confirmed that within the five-year action plan, there is room for review, and this can allow for council and resident feedback, which can include low traffic neighbourhoods.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation.

6. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

Members agreed the following questions:

Item 6.2 – Strategic Plan Q3 Performance Report

Whether the Mayor and Corporate Leadership Team will be seeking the views of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee about the suit of Key Performance Indicators to be used in 2023/24 and the targets that will be set for each of those?

Item 6.6 – Voluntary Sector Grants Programme

Whether the Mayor will be reinstating the Grants Scrutiny Sub-committee recommended following the Secretary of State's directions to Tower Hamlets Council in 2014 following receipt of the PwC report, which revealed inadequacies in the allocation of grants to voluntary sector organisations?

7. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

Members noted the forward plan.

8. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

9. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

RESOLVED:

Members Noted the updates.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

RESOLVED:

Members Noted the Reports

11. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items.

12. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

As the agenda circulated had no exempt/confidential reports and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration

14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

15. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

16. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL) CABINET PAPERS

Nil items.

17. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 19:29

Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Overview & Scrutiny Committee