

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT 18:55 ON TUESDAY, 16 MAY 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

Co-optees Present in Person:

Jahid Ahmed
Halima Islam

Officers Present in Person:

Sharon Godman	(Director Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities)
Oli Kapopo	(Head of Waste Operations)
Simon Baxter	(Interim Director of Public Realm)
Richard Williams	(Business Manager Operational Services)
Filuck Miah	Senior Strategy and Policy Officer
Thomas French	(Democratic Services Officer (Committees))

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND OTHER INTERESTS

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

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

None.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

RESOLVED:

Members Noted the Reports

6. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

Members noted the forward plan.

7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

8.1 Mayor's Spotlight

The Chair confirmed The Mayor was unable to attend the committee meeting and the Mayor's Spotlight will be rescheduled to a future committee meeting.

Members asked if the Mayor could prioritize attending committee meetings when he is invited by the committee, along with the relevant Lead Member for reports. If Committee meetings are to be cancelled, then members do need advanced noticed where possible.

8.2 Streets and Parks Cleanliness Spotlight

The Streets and Parks Cleanliness Spotlight was presented by Oli Kapopo, Head of Waste Operations, Richard Williams, Business Manager Operational Services and Simon Baxter, Interim Director of Public Realm.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- What are the levels of fines or penalties that have been given out to businesses due to waste? Has there been any difference in the

behaviour of businesses after they have been fined? Richard Williams confirmed that there over 18,000 investigations into waste items found. While the numbers are going up, a lot of work is going into looking at the known hot spots and putting measures in place to combat busy areas. There has been less reports of fly tipping and work has been done to develop behaviour change in businesses. It has been effective to issue fines to businesses and build on the engagement that has happened around the fines.

- Issues are raised by residents on missed waste collections, routes not being completed or the parking infrastructure not allowing for collections. The council also needs to work on its own waste collection issues, and not just punishing residents who just want their waste collected. Simon Baxter confirmed that route optimisation is being developed, and the council is working with the trade unions and should be online around Q3 this year. The service needs to be stronger on waste collection as it currently is fragmented, and stronger links need to be made with areas like environmental health. Tower Hamlets is a densely populated borough, and the council is engaging with the waste emergency and the council is working to make it better.
- The response team responding to members about waste issues reported is getting worse for delays in turn around. Oli Kapopo noted the response issues and would feedback to the team.
- The communication engagement with residents and businesses is good but more work should be done on those visiting the borough and ensuring waste collection in the nighttime economy. Areas like Fish Island and many parks within the borough are not being acted on after busy periods. Resident groups volunteering for litter collections are not enough to ensure these areas are suitable for residents and visitors. Oli Kapopo confirmed officers would look at the areas raised and work to see greater collections and measures.
- Food waste collection is an area the council needs to consider developing greater infrastructure for.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation.

9. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1 Scrutiny review of food insecurity in the Borough

The Scrutiny Review on understanding the impact of food insecurity on residents and review whether the council and its partners response to tackling food poverty is effective and sustainable was presented by Cllr Sabina Khan, Scrutiny Lead for Resources and Finance.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- When reports like this discuss poverty, it is important to put context on the work the council does as temporary, council services can only do so much, as long-term poverty is seen as a failing in government policy.
- The work to get as much community engagement and school input around this review has been important to make sure it is a meaningful review.
- While the funding to support foodbanks and the food hubs within the borough, the council needs to do more to ensure child poverty is addressed after so many years of failed national government policy.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation and agreed to submit the report for Executive Response.

9.2 Women's Safety - Scrutiny Review Report

The Scrutiny Review on Women's Safety was presented by Cllr Abdul Malik Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- The council needs to do more to ensure that women are taken seriously on safety and engagement. Greater signage needs to be placed around the borough.
- Gaining more Male Allies feels counterproductive as a recommendation within this report. Gaining Male Allies should be a side effect of ensuring Women and Girls are safe within the Borough and funding and officer time should be placed within this area instead. Women should be at the centre of the discussion when making these strategies.
- It is important to work with everyone within the borough to ensure Women's safety is taken seriously.
- The committee asked for the wording within the recommendations to be updated before going to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation and agreed to submit the report for Executive Response.

9.3 Scrutiny Annual Report 22-23

The Scrutiny Annual Report 22-23 was presented by the Chair. The Chair thanked officers for their hard work on creating and editing the video that will

be going along with the report. The Chair thanked members and Scrutiny Leads for their hard work on the committee in 2023/23.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

9.4 Appointment of Co-opted Members to Scrutiny Committee and Sub Committees

The Appointment of Co-opted Members to Scrutiny Committee and Sub Committees was presented by Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the appointment of the persons listed in the table at paragraph 3.5 to the co-opted positions indicated, subject to any necessary pre-appointment checks in line with the Council's current approach.

9.5 Tracking Recommendations - Parking Challenge Session

The Tracking Recommendations - Parking Challenge Session report was presented by Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report and agreed to bring this report back for further discussion within the 2023/24 Committee Workplan.

10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Members asked about overcrowding and the impact it has on fostering provision in the borough.

RESOLVED:

Members Noted the updates.

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

12. 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.

13. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 21:03

Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Overview & Scrutiny Committee