

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT 18:40 ON MONDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

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|-----------------------------|--|
| Councillor Musthak Ahmed | |
| Councillor Bodrul Choudhury | Scrutiny Lead for Children & Education |
| Councillor Ahmodur Khan | Scrutiny Lead for Adults and Health Services |
| Councillor Abdul Malik | Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety |
| Councillor Abdul Mannan | Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration |
| Councillor Sabina Akhtar | |

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Marc Francis
Councillor Asma Islam
Councillor Sabina Khan

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

Other Councillors Present Virtually:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Councillor Saied Ahmed | Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living |
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Co-optees Present in Person:

Jahid Ahmed
Halima Islam

Officers Present in Person:

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|-----------------|--|
| Steve Halsey | (Chief Executive) |
| Afazul Hoque | (Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities) |
| Jennifer Peters | (Director of Planning & Building Control) |
| Daniel Keer | (Strategy and Policy Lead) |
| Thomas French | (Democratic Services Officer (Committees)) |

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Marc Francis, Asma Islam and Sabina Khan gave apologies, and they joined the meeting online. Councillor Sabina Akhtar attended as a Substitute.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND OTHER INTERESTS

Members declared interests in items on the agenda for the meeting as set out below:

| Councillor | Item(s) | Type of interest | Reason |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Cllr Abdul Malik * | 4 | Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest | Is on the executive of one of the organisations receiving funding from the Mayor's Community Grants Programme |

*Cllr Abdul Malik declared this interest during the discussion of the Call In and agreed to leave the room for the rest of the committee meeting.

3. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

4. CALL IN OF MAYOR'S COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME 2023-27

Cllr Mufeedah Bustin presented the reasons for call-in on behalf of the Call-in members and proposed alternative course of action as set out in the report.

The committee made the following comments and questions:

- Can you elaborate on the concerns residents have been raising about the cost of living in the Isle of Dogs? And do you feel the Mayor's Community Grants Programme needs to be reviewed to support the residents of the Isle of Dogs better? Cllr Bustin outlined the major concerns residents have raised, including the effects of the universal credit rollout. The Mayor's Community Grants Programme could help provide some funding structure to alleviate some of the concerns that residents have if it was structured that way. There are many projects that directly support the Isle of Dogs, most are borough wide.
- Can you detail how increased funding for NCIL 3 would help residents in this area? Cllr Bustin detailed how funding Neighbourhood SIL would help organisations within the area support residents and fund projects, including the Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network, who run critical services for Black and Asians residents. Organisations like Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network ensure that residents do

not need further support from the council, so without the funding it will place greater strain on the council itself.

- Can you outline different funding models that could be considered? Cllr Bustin reflected on funding models, highlighting the general fund for more immediate funding.
- How much of the £4M allocated to the Docklands area goes to the Isle of Dogs? Cllr Bustin questioned that this breakdown is not available for local members, and it would be helpful for understanding the issues in the area, as currently only projects totalling a few thousand pounds seem to be supporting the Isle of Dogs.

Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living with Steve Halsey, Chief Executive, Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities, Jennifer Peters, Director of Planning & Building Control set out the context of the Cabinet Decision and reviewed the key elements of the decision.

The committee made the following comments and questions:

- How will the Mayor's Community Grants Programme support forward planning for the council's future aims? Officers detailed how the Mayor's Community Grants Programme supports the aims of the council's strategic plan, including thematic work around supporting children in and outside of schools.
- The council needs to create mitigations within the Mayor's Community Grants Programme to ensure the issues within the Isle of Dogs can be supported. Can any monetary figure be put on the funding and infrastructure that will be put back into the Isle of Dogs, from development in the area? Officers detailed how the grant funding will be distributed and highlighted how social housing capital funding will be agreed for the area. Officers agreed that how Mayor's Community Grants Programme is allocated through out the year will be reported to the committee in a timely way.
- The work of the Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network should be acknowledged, rather than just relying on the council's already under pressure resident's hubs to provide the same services.
- Can the way the funding has been allocated to the different areas within the borough be detailed? Officers detailed how the Mayor's Community Grants Programme was allocated across the borough, highlighting over 52 per cent of the services will be borough wide.

After hearing from the Call-in Members, Lead Member and officers, the Committee considered the reasons for the Call-in and discussed if the committee should take further action.

DECISION

The Committee RESOLVED that no further action would be taken on the call in.

5. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

5.1 Mayor's Community Grants Programme 2023-2027

The Chair confirmed that as the Mayor's Community Grants Programme 2023-2027 was considered for Call In, it did not need to be considered further within the Scrutiny Spotlight.

DECISION

Members noted the report.

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

Members of the committee asked for the Annual Resident's Survey Results to be discussed at a future committee meeting.

7. 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.

8. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 19:42

Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Overview & Scrutiny Committee