

# Public Document Pack

## Chief Executive

**THE CIVIC MAYOR, CHAIR OF  
COUNCIL BUSINESS AND ALL  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Steven Pleasant, Chief Executive  
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Our Ref	rl/Council
Ask for	Robert Landon
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Date	22 September 2015

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend an **ORDINARY MEETING** of the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council to be held on **Tuesday, 29th September, 2015 at 5.00 pm** in the Jubilee Hall, Dukinfield Town Hall when the undermentioned business is to be transacted.

Yours faithfully,



**Steven Pleasant  
Chief Executive**



Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	<p><b>CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p> <p><b>Announcements</b></p> <p>The Civic Mayor to make any appropriate announcements.</p> <p><b>At this juncture the Civic Mayor will retire from the Chair and the Chair of Council Business shall assume the Chair for the remaining business.</b></p>	
2.	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of Council held on 14 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of Council Business (or other person presiding) (Minutes attached).</p>	1 - 8
3.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Council.</p>	
4.	<p><b>COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p> <p>To receive any announcements or communications from the Chair of Council Business, the Executive Leader, Members of the Executive Cabinet or the Chief Executive.</p>	
5.	<p><b>COUNCIL BIG CONVERSATION</b></p> <p>To consider any questions submitted by Members of the public in accordance with Standing Orders 31.12 and 31.13.</p>	
6.	<p><b>MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET</b></p> <p>To receive the minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 26 August 2015.</p>	9 - 18
7.	<p><b>MEETING OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>To receive the minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on 8 September 2015.</p>	19 - 24
8.	<p><b>MEETING OF OVERVIEW (AUDIT) PANEL</b></p> <p>To receive the minutes of the Meeting of the Overview (Audit) Panel held on: 27 July 2015 and 21 September 2015.</p>	25 - 28
9.	<p><b>MEETING OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP</b></p> <p>To receive the minutes of the Meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 27 July 2015.</p>	29 - 32
10.	<p><b>MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL BODIES</b></p> <p>To agree the following additions to the membership of the Local Pensions Board:</p>	

***From: Head of Democratic Services – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Robert Landon, Head of Democratic Services, on 0161 342 2146, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.***

- (i) That Catherine Lloyd (UNISON) and Chris Goodwin (Unite) be appointed as employee representatives on the Local Pensions Board;
- (ii) That Councillor Janet Cooper be appointed as employer representative on the Local Pensions Board;
- (iii) That Jane Hammond be appointed as the Local Pensions Board Monitoring Office.

## **11. NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **(a) To consider the following motion in the name of Councillor M. Smith**

That this Council recognises the hazards caused by Sky Lanterns (also known as Chinese Lanterns).

Once released, there is no control over the flight path a Sky Lantern takes whilst airborne, or the place it lands when it has burnt out. Sky Lanterns have therefore given rise to a number of serious safety concerns including:

- Risks to pets, livestock and wildlife.
- Dangers posed to aircraft.
- Fires and damage to property and vehicles.
- The impact on the environment, including littering.

Nationally, several significant fires have been caused by Sky lanterns; perhaps the most notable of which was a fire at Smethwick recycling plant in the West Midlands that caused damage totaling an estimated £6m. In Greater Manchester alone they are thought to be responsible for more than 60 fires in the last 5 years.

Council notes that, in response to the dangers posed by the lanterns, a number of Countries including Australia, Spain and Germany have banned their use. However, despite acknowledging these dangers, DEFRA have ruled out a ban on Sky Lanterns.

This Council therefore resolves to ban the sale and use of Sky Lanterns on any Council owned property or premises.

### **(b) To consider the following motion in the name of Councillor Taylor**

That this Council notes with disappointment the passing of the Trade Union Bill at its second reading in parliament on 14 September 2015.

This Council believes that the Bill represents the most vicious attack on Trade Unions in over 30 years by introducing measures that will make it more difficult for employees to stand up for and defend their rights at work.

Amongst other things the passing of the Bill will introduce:

- The removal of the ability of public sector employees to have Trade Union subscriptions deducted from their salaries.

***From: Head of Democratic Services – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Robert Landon, Head of Democratic Services, on 0161 342 2146, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.***

- A requirement for unions to notify police if they intend to discuss a strike on social media.
- A requirement for police to be notified 14 days in advance of a strike if striking workers intend to use placards or loudspeakers on a picket line.
- The appointment of a 'picket supervisor' for each picket who will be required to wear an armband and give their name and contact details to the police and their employer.
- A minimum turnout threshold of 50% in ballots for strike action.

This Council further notes that human rights groups Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights have all condemned the Bill as an attack on the basic right to protest.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Sajid Javid MP on behalf of the Council setting out our opposition to the Bill.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write on behalf of the Council to our 3 local MPs setting out our opposition to the Bill and requesting that they use all means available during the Committee stage of the Bill to prevent it from being enacted in its current form.

## 12. QUESTIONS

To answer questions (if any) asked under Standing Order 17.2, for which due notice has been given by a Member of the Council.

## 13. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any other items which the Chair of Council Business (or other person presiding) is of the opinion shall be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

***From: Head of Democratic Services – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Robert Landon, Head of Democratic Services, on 0161 342 2146, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.***

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## ITEM NO: 2

### COUNCIL

14 July 2015

Commenced: 5.00pm

Terminated: 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor V Ricci (Civic Mayor)

Councillors Affleck, Bell, Bowden, Bowerman, Bray, Buckley, Cooney, Cooper, Dickinson, Downs, Drennan, Fairfoull, J. Fitzpatrick, P. Fitzpatrick, Fowler, Francis, Glover, Gwynne, Jackson, Kinsey, Kitchen, D Lane, J. Lane, McNally, I. Miah, R. Miah, Middleton, Patrick, Pearce, Peet, K. Quinn, S. Quinn, Robinson, Ryan, Shember-Critchley, Sidebottom, M. Smith, T. Smith, Taylor, F. Travis, L. Travis, Ward, Warrington, Welsh, White, Whitehead and Wild.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Bailey, Ballagher, Beeley, Cartey, A Holland, B Holland, Piddington, Reynolds and Sweeton.

*Civic Mayor (Councillor V Ricci) in the Chair*

#### 19. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor informed Members that the two Tameside residents had been recognised in Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours List. Mrs Ann Barlow from Ashton-under-Lyne had been awarded the British Empire Medal for her services as a Homewatch Co-ordinator and Mrs Jean Montgomery from Denton had been awarded the British Empire Medal for her services to the Cub and Scout movement in Reddish. Members joined the Civic Mayor in extending their sincere congratulations to Ann and Jean.

*Councillor Kitchen, Chair of Council Business, in the Chair*

#### 20. MINUTES

##### RESOLVED

**That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 19 May 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of Council Business.**

#### 21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members at this meeting of the Council.

#### 22. COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Taylor, the Deputy Executive Leader, announced that Ashton's award-winning market, already voted Britain's most popular market for the second year running, had now been named Britain's most coach-friendly shopping destination in the National Coach Tourism Awards organised by trade magazine Coach Monthly. This latest award again underlined the huge economic importance of Ashton Market to the borough and Councillor Taylor thanked the traders and staff for their ongoing drive and commitment and all the shoppers and visitors for their loyal support.

He also made reference to a full week of accreditation of the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The outcome of the Assessment was that the Council fulfilled the requirements of the Standard with 100% compliance, a huge achievement in itself but it also achieved compliance plus in 8 areas. The result demonstrated the innovation and delivery of service that was over and above what would normally be expected.

Councillor Robinson, the Executive Member for Transport and Land Use, made reference to the recent success of the Operations and Greenspace Team in the Local Government Chronicle Awards, which recognised the way the unit has managed to maintain and even improve the work it did despite cuts to its budget in excess of 50 per cent, made possible by a radical redesign. He also thanked the Council's Engineering Team for their commitment in ensuring the successful completion of the Tameside Pinch Point Scheme in Ashton-under-Lyne.

Councillor Travis, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Health, commented on the Sky High Adventure facility at Active Medlock in Droylsden which, would be opening in early August. As well as providing an active day out for families from Tameside and beyond, the climbing centre would cater for schools, young people and adults with a disability or additional needs, corporate team building, youth groups and parties. She also highlighted the successful Stamford Park run, a free, weekly, timed 5km run in the Park with all levels of runners welcomed and encouraged to take part in this initiative. In addition, she advised on the Record Breakers Summer Reading Challenge where all children aged 5 – 11 years would be invited to sign up at Tameside Libraries to take part in the challenge to read 6 books over the summer months.

She was, however, disappointed to report on the Government's recent announcement that public health funding was to be cut, as part of wider measures designed to achieve £3bn in public sector savings. Investment in public health was already under pressure potentially leaving services and staffing levels unable to cope with rising need and reducing the Council's ability to continue with its planned programme of health initiatives that were making an impact in the Borough.

The Executive Leader made reference to the Government's recent 'stability' budget, the full details of which would not be known until the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn and that the Council had by far the biggest financial challenge it had ever faced. The budget report for the years 2015/16 and 2016/17 laid out the difficulties to be faced including savings of £38m to be found through the next two years. However, with the Government's announcement that it would be cutting £200m from local health spending across the country initial estimates suggest the Council would need to make a further £10m of savings this year and next.

There would be some tough and unpalatable decisions to be made with the scale of the cuts being faced and the Council would be exploring a detailed range of proposals. These included reducing staff numbers by a further 200 posts and reviewing staff terms and conditions, continuing to work with trade unions to find the least worst approach so that as many staff as possible could be protected. Other proposals being considered were reducing support for carers, people with learning disabilities and services to children and the elderly, reductions in street cleansing and the maintenance of parks, further cuts in libraries and cultural events, less money for roads and winter gritting and reductions in home to school transport as well as cuts to children's centres.

He announced the launch of a public consultation exercise which would take place over the summer months on where these cuts might have to fall and made reference to last year's Big Conversation on the Budget which showed that communities wanted to be involved in the future of their services. Tameside was the only Council in Greater Manchester to increase council tax for this financial year and although it was not an easy decision, the Council engaged with its residents to explain why it was necessary and that every penny would be going to support front line services as promised.

The Executive Leader went on to share some good news to share and was pleased to announce two significant milestones in the Vision Tameside Project. The topping-out ceremony took place in mid-June for the new Clarendon Sixth Form College on course to open in the autumn and the



process of moving Council staff out of the current administration centre into new locations across the Borough had been completed.

In conclusion, he stated that the financial savings challenge was enormous, the hard work was just beginning and the next few years would test the Council in a way that was never thought possible. Although there were no easy solutions he was clear that the Council would be working with its staff, the trade unions and communities to act quickly to make necessary changes to achieve a balanced budget.

### **23. COUNCIL BIG CONVERSATION**

The Chair reported that a question had been received from Mr L Billington as follows:

*“Why does the Council require a Chair of Council Business being paid £11,269 per year to chair roughly five or six full council meetings a year when other boroughs have the mayor chair full council meetings.”*

The Executive Leader responded that the Council Members' Allowances were set in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003. Under the Regulations, Members' Allowances were determined by an Independent Remuneration Panel which, regularly reviewed who received an allowance and how much and set the level. The Independent Panel had reviewed on a number of occasions allowances paid to Members and believed that the allowance paid to the Chair of Council Business was entirely justified. The question suggested that the Chair of Council Business received an allowance solely for Chairing Council meetings, this was far from being the case. In addition to his normal duties as Councillor, the Chair of Council Business was also responsible for, amongst other things:

- To be a Member of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Steering Group;
- To Chair meetings of the Employment Appeals Panel;
- Attend meetings of the Executive Board and Cabinet;
- Serve as a Member of the Overview (Audit) Panel;
- To lead on new member induction, member training and support;
- To act as mentor to newly elected Councillors;
- Upholding and promoting the Council's Constitution;
- To have oversight of the operation of the Mayoral function and to advise the Civic Mayor on the operation of the Mayoral Protocol.

Additionally, this role was independently considered as part of the Corporate Performance Assessments undertaken by the Audit Commission when the Council was awarded one of the highest scores nationally for corporate governance.

### **24. MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 24 June 2015. It was moved by Councillor K. Quinn, seconded by Councillor J. Fitzpatrick and:

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 24 June 2015 be received.**

### **25. LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader and Executive Director (Governance and Resources) advising that under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment)

(Governance) Regulations 2015, administering authorities were required to establish their local pension boards prior to 1 April 2015.

The report explained that the role of the local pensions board was to assist the administering authority in its role as a scheme manager of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF) Local Board (the 'Board') was established at the Full Council meeting on 24 February 2015 and held its first meeting on 16 April 2015, well in advance of the deadline of 1 August 2015 when Local Boards were required to be fully operational.

The Regulations required local boards to comprise an equal number of employer and scheme member representatives, with at least 4 members in total. The GMPF Local Board was established with a '2+2' structure to facilitate the Local Board being quickly established and operational and to ensure capacity and knowledge and understanding requirements were met.

The intention had been to increase the size of the Local Board as its work programme evolved and expanded and the Local Board's Terms of Reference stated that the size of the Local Board would be reviewed periodically. The existing members of the GMPF and the GMPF Management Panel were supportive of moving to an expanded structure with effect from September which would increase the range of skills and experience on the Local Board.

It was moved by Councillor K Quinn, seconded by Councillor Taylor and:

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the membership of the GMPF Local Board be increased to 5 member representatives and 5 employer representatives.**
- (ii) That the revised Terms of Reference for the Local Board as appended to the report be agreed.**
- (iii) That the additional Local Board members be appointed as set out in paragraphs 8 to 13 of the Terms of Reference.**

#### **26. MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL BODIES**

It was moved by Councillor K Quinn, seconded by Councillor Taylor and:

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That Councillor Kinsey replace Councillor Jackson as Deputy Chair of the Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel;**
- (ii) That Councillor Shember-Critchley be taken off the Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel.**
- (iii) That Council notes the appointment of Tony Lloyd to the role of Interim Mayor for Greater Manchester for the period June 2015-May 2017 following a successful interview process, to allow the role of Interim Mayor to be fully integrated into the decision making process of the GMCA and AGMA, to agree to GMCA becoming a full member of AGMA in its own right.**

#### **27. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION – EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader and Executive Director (Governance and Resources) informing Members of the changes required under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. The Regulations required the Council to change its Constitution to amend the disciplinary process for the statutory positions of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer. The Regulations provided that before a decision was taken to dismiss any of the three Statutory Officers, the Council must appoint a special panel and must take into account the Panel's views. In the case of a proposed disciplinary action against any one of the three statutory officers; namely Head of Paid Service, Monitoring

Officer and Section 151 Officer, the Council is required to invite at least two independent persons who have been appointed for the purposes of the Members' conduct regime under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 to form part of that 'independent panel', and must include in that invitation any of its 'independent persons'.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the implementation of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 be noted and the Council's Employment Procedure Rules be amended as detailed in section 1.5 of the report together with any other necessary amendments to affect the same.**

## **28. NOTICE OF MOTION**

Consideration was given to the following motion received in accordance with Standing Order 16.1, which was proposed by Councillor K. Quinn and seconded by Councillor Robinson:

*"That this Council believes that the announced suspension of electrification works to the Transpennine railway line is a betrayal of Tory manifesto promises to the North of England.*

*Electrification was meant to bring improved and more efficient services between Manchester, Leeds and the wider area with six trains every hour between Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester and journey times as quick as 43 minutes between Leeds and Manchester.*

*It is estimated that this work would have produced up to 20,000 to 30,000 private sector jobs across the North. Journey time reductions would also enhance the economic competitiveness of the North and allow Northern businesses to recruit from a wider pool of talent.*

*Locally, faster and more efficient electric trains would underpin improved opportunities for services stopping at Stalybridge, Ashton and potentially Guide Bridge.*

*Nowhere is the North/South divide more apparent than in the area of funding for transport infrastructure. In total, 92% of all of the money released for this purpose by the government has been spent in London and the South East.*

*While Northerners continue to be packed into second-hand carriages on creaking lines, the £14.5 billion of capital expenditure allocated to Crossrail alone is nine times more than the amount earmarked for all the rail projects in the North West, North East and Yorkshire combined. The Secretary of State for Transport has also announced that yet more London-centric railway work will remain the top priority for this government.*

*If the government is sincere about creating their "Northern Powerhouse" rather than a 'Northern Poorhouse', then they need to stop the Northern Powercut and put serious and fair investment in quicker and better railway connections between the great cities of the North to achieve that economically sustainable Northern Power House.*

*The Council strongly urges that electrification of the Transpennine line is recommended as an immediate priority, and that our local Members of Parliament be asked to strongly press this issue for our constituents in Parliament."*

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Dickinson and seconded by Councillor Bell:

*"This Council believes that the announced pause of electrification works to the Transpennine railway line is not in the immediate interests of the North of England.*

*It is estimated that this work would have produced up to 20,000 to 30,000 private sector jobs across the North. Journey time reductions would also enhance the economic competitiveness of the North and allow Northern businesses to recruit from a wider pool of talent.*

*Locally, faster and more efficient electric trains would underpin improved opportunities for services stopping at Stalybridge, Ashton and potentially Guide Bridge.*

*Council is concerned at the level of infrastructure spending in London and the South East compared to that in the North, and calls on Government to ensure that infrastructure schemes in the North are committed to and prioritised to generate maximum economic benefit.*

*This Council believes that if the Northern Powerhouse ambition is to be realised, it needs to be matched with commensurate transport infrastructure investment to help connect our great Northern cities.*

*The Council strongly urges that electrification of the Transpennine line is recommended as an immediate priority, and that our local Members of Parliament be asked to strongly press this issue for our constituents in Parliament.”*

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was rejected and the original motion was put to vote and it was –

#### **RESOLVED**

**That this Council believes that the announced suspension of electrification works to the Transpennine railway line is a betrayal of Tory manifesto promises to the North of England.**

**Electrification was meant to bring improved and more efficient services between Manchester, Leeds and the wider area with six trains every hour between Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester and journey times as quick as 43 minutes between Leeds and Manchester.**

**It is estimated that this work would have produced up to 20,000 to 30,000 private sector jobs across the North. Journey time reductions would also enhance the economic competitiveness of the North and allow Northern businesses to recruit from a wider pool of talent.**

**Locally, faster and more efficient electric trains would underpin improved opportunities for services stopping at Stalybridge, Ashton and potentially Guide Bridge.**

**Nowhere is the North/South divide more apparent than in the area of funding for transport infrastructure. In total, 92% of all of the money released for this purpose by the government has been spent in London and the South East.**

**While Northerners continue to be packed into second-hand carriages on creaking lines, the £14.5 billion of capital expenditure allocated to Crossrail alone is nine times more than the amount earmarked for all the rail projects in the North West, North East and Yorkshire combined. The Secretary of State for Transport has also announced that yet more London-centric railway work will remain the top priority for this government.**

**If the government is sincere about creating their “Northern Powerhouse” rather than a ‘Northern Poorhouse’, then they need to stop the Northern Powercut and put serious and fair investment in quicker and better railway connections between the great cities of the North to achieve that economically sustainable Northern Power House.**

**The Council strongly urges that electrification of the Transpennine line is recommended as an immediate priority, and that our local Members of Parliament be asked to strongly press this issue for our constituents in Parliament.**

**29. QUESTIONS**

The Chair reported no questions had been received in accordance with Standing Order 17.2.

**30. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items of business for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**

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## ITEM NO: 6

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

26 August 2015

Commenced: 2.00pm

Terminated: 2.30pm

**Present:** Councillor K. Quinn (Chair)  
Councillors J. Fitzpatrick, Robinson, Taylor, Travis and Warrington.

**Apology for Absence:** Councillors Cooney, Kitchen and Gwynne.

#### 11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report at this meeting.

#### 12. MINUTES

##### (a) Executive Cabinet

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 24 June 2015.

##### RESOLVED

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 24 June 2015 be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

##### (b) Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel held on 13 July 2015.

##### RESOLVED

**That the minutes of the Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel held on 13 July 2015 be received and the following recommendations be approved:**

##### Asset Management Update

- (1) That the list of disposals identified in the appendix to the report be approved.
- (2) That the allocation of £2,967,875 to invest in school buildings be approved as detailed in the report.
- (3) That approval be given to the issue of formal variation to the Facilities Management Agreement with the TIP and the rebasing of the contract with effect from 1 July 2015.

##### Education Capital Update

- (4) That the amendment of the Education Capital Programme as detailed in the report to reflect the outcome of the review of commitments at 31 March 2015 be approved.
- (5) That the allocation of £3,769,818 to undertake works detailed in the report for various building refurbishment / fabric repairs be approved.
- (6) That the procurement of the identified work through the Tameside Investment Partnership, with the achievement of local spend and other value added outcomes being reported within future reports to Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel, Executive Board and Executive Cabinet be approved.

- (7) That all academies and maintained schools to seek the Council's consent for work to be carried out prior to commissioning the work to ensure that building regulations, planning requirements and all health and safety issues as well as any impact on capacity are complied with before work on site commenced.

#### **Transport Fleet Replacement**

- (8) That approval be given for the procurement of 58 vehicles identified in the report via a competitive EU tendering process to be funded by Prudential Borrowing and relevant service areas to be recharged an annual rental to cover purchase, borrowing and maintenance costs covering the relevant borrowing period.
- (9) That approval be given to a review being undertaken of the whole fleet to determine the Council's service needs over the next 3 to 5 years to support the delivery of those identified services in the most effective manner.
- (10) That approval be given to a cost benefit analysis being undertaken for the remaining fleet (maximum 94 vehicles) in conjunction with the above review to determine the most appropriate vehicle strategy going forward for the next 3 to 5 years.

#### **Engineering Capital Programme 2015/16 and Beyond**

- (11) That the Engineering Capital Programme for 2015/16 as detailed in the Appendix to the report be approved.
- (12) That approval be given to the temporary Corporate Funding of £0.167m towards the Denton Link Road scheme until the approval to vire the monies from the ITB Minor Works Budget had been granted by Transport for Greater Manchester.

#### **Tameside Interchange Land Assembly Governance Arrangements**

- (13) That Option 1 as detailed in the report be approved as the most appropriate way forward.

#### **Land Transferred for Affordable Housing – Early Repayment of Capital Receipt from New Charter Housing Trust**

- (14) That the valuation of the early repayment of the capital receipt of £549,689 in respect of the sites at Kynder Street, Katherine House and Cavendish Street be approved, to release the restrictive covenant in favour of the Council and give New Charter House Limited an unencumbered title.

#### **(c) Enforcement Co-ordination Panel**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Enforcement Co-ordination Panel held on 29 July 2015.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the Enforcement Co-ordination Panel held on 29 July 2015 be approved.**

#### **(d) Association of Greater Manchester Authorities/Greater Manchester Combined Authority**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader and Chief Executive, which informed Members of the issues considered at the AGMA Executive Board meetings and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held on 29 May 2015 and 26 June 2015.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the minutes be noted.**



**(e) Forward Plan of Strategic Decisions for the GMCA and AGMA Executive**

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan of Strategic Decisions for the GMCA and AGMA Executive held on 31 July 2015.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Forward Plan of Strategic Decisions for the GMCA and AGMA Executive held on 31 July 2015 be noted.**

**13. FINANCIAL MONITORING**

**(a) Revenue Monitoring**

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy (Performance and Finance) and the Assistant Executive Director (Finance) detailing the overall net projected outturn revenue position for 2015/16 which was £12.7m over budget and recovery plans were included in the report to address the position. This forecast was set in the context of challenging savings targets of £24m for 2015/16 and a further £14.1m and £15.4m planned for 2016/17 and 2017/18 respectively. Strong budget management was required across the Council to ensure the Council achieved its financial plans and higher than budgeted spending would need to be addressed.

In particular, the position for Children's Services would need to be tackled through a combination of efficiency improvements and a review of the base budget and plans for improved efficiency had been approved by Council in February 2015. The position for Adults Services would require remedial action to be taken by the service within the year and ongoing budget deficits unaddressed at year end would be carried forward to be resolved in future years.

With regard to the Business Rates and Council Tax, Executive Cabinet was advised that income was slightly under targeted collection rates. Both areas would be monitored during the financial year and it was anticipated that all target income could be collected within 2015/16.

In conclusion, it was stated that the summary of the annual accounts during the last financial year, as detailed at **Appendix 5**, would be published with the Council's annual Statement of Accounts for 2014/15.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the projected budget outturn position be noted.**
- (ii) That the detail for each service area be noted.**
- (iii) That the changes to the revenue budgets as outlined be approved.**
- (iv) That the Summary Annual Accounts 2014/15 as detailed in Appendix 5 be noted.**

**(b) Capital Monitoring Report**

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy (Performance and Finance) and the Assistant Executive Director (Finance) summarising the capital monitoring position as at 30 June 2015, which showed that, at present, £53.991m of investment was £15.992m less than the current budget. It was proposed therefore, that the capital investment programme be re-profiled to reflect current information and the re-phasing of £15.390m into the next financial year would reduce this variation to £0.602m.

Details of the projected outturn capital expenditure at June 2015 by service area was detailed in the report and explanations provided for capital projects with a projected variation of £0.100m or above over the life of the project. Schemes with an in-year variation in excess of £0.100m were highlighted and approval was being sought to re-profile the capital expenditure of these projects.

The report also incorporated an update on Compulsory Purchase Orders, indemnities and potential liabilities.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the current capital budget monitoring position be noted.**
- (ii) That the resources currently available to fund the capital programme be noted.**
- (iii) That the re-phasing to reflect up-to-date investment profiles be approved.**
- (iv) That the current position for Compulsory Purchase Orders and Indemnities be noted.**
- (v) That the capital receipts position be noted.**
- (vi) That the Prudential Indicator position be noted.**

### **13. CABINET OUTCOMES**

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy (Performance and Finance) and the Executive Director (Governance and Resources) which presented the Tameside Council Cabinet Outcomes document for approval. Tameside Council Cabinet Outcomes 2015 was a key part of the Council's framework for delivering key projects and programmes and set out publically, by Cabinet Deputy portfolio, achievements to date, ongoing challenges and future projects.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Tameside Council Cabinet Outcomes 2015 document be approved.**
- (ii) That the document be published on the Council's website from September 2015.**

### **14. CUSTOMER SERVICES EXCELLENCE – OUTCOME OF ASSESSMENT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Executive Leader, First Deputy (Performance and Finance), the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Governance and Resources) advising Members on the outcomes of the recent Customer Service Excellence Assessment and the recommendations submitted and ratified by the Centre for Assessment – Accredited Body for the Cabinet Office.

Executive Cabinet was advised of the process for the 2015 accreditation, which commenced some months ago, including an initial pre assessment allowing assessors to check evidence against the Standard's criteria. This was followed by a 5 day onsite visit where assessors met with elected members, staff, partners and customers.

The informal recommendation by the lead assessor was that the Council should be awarded the standard with 100% compliance against all criteria. In addition, the lead assessor also recommended that the Council be awarded eight new areas of compliance plus, which was a tremendous achievement.

The recommendations as a whole had been ratified by the Customer Service Excellence Panel and a copy of the full assessment was appended to the report. As well as the excellent overall impression, the assessors also highlighted particular areas of strength, for example, the Council's record of communicating with customers particularly those who were considered to be hard to reach. Communications with employees, elected member and communities was planned to publicise the outcome of the assessment.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the award of the Customer Service Excellence standard achieved for the whole of the Council be noted.**

## 15. NEXT STEPS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods and Health) and the Head of Stronger Communities explaining that the way in which people accessed Council Services was changing and it was necessary to consider the future face to face Customer Service offer to ensure it continued to meet demand whilst being affordable and cost effective to deliver. Following an Executive Decision on 14 May 2015, a public consultation exercise had been undertaken via the Council's Big Conversation on 3 potential options for future service provision detailed in the report and summarised as follows:

- Option 1 – providing level 2 customer services at all Libraries and retention of Ashton Customer Services on current opening hours at its new location of Clarence Arcade;
- Option 2 – providing level 2 customer services at all Libraries and reduction in opening hours at Hyde, Stalybridge and Stalybridge customer service provision;
- Option 3 – as Option 2, however, provision at Hyde would be further reduced.

Attention was drawn to the current provision, the reasons for reduction in demand, the cost to provide the service, the results of the public consultation and addressing the concerns of the survey responders set out in the report.

Taking all relevant factors into consideration it was proposed that Option 1 would provide an offer suitable to meet the majority of residents' needs whilst also being affordable to the Council. This would provide Level 2 customer service at all Libraries and general enquiries including verification of housing benefit documents. Ashton was the most used Customer Service Centre, which had only seen a very small reduction in visits during the last 12 months. Ashton Customer Services would be retained in its current format and the opening hours remain as currently provided.

Whilst some customers would be affected, if Option 1 was implemented, the majority of the survey respondents could still access the service they required in their local town at a library. As three quarters of respondents indicated that they would access services by alternative methods it was not felt that Option 1 would cause a significant detrimental impact on residents.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That Option 1 be approved and implemented as the future face to face Customer Service model.**
- (ii) That the service be kept under review to ensure it continued to meet demand whilst being affordable and cost effective.**

## 16. CORPORATE EQUALITY SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Wellbeing) and Executive Director (Governance and Resources), which explained that Tameside's Corporate Equality Scheme 2015-19 was the second scheme since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010.

It detailed how the Council would fulfil its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and building on the achievements and developments made since the introduction of the first Corporate Equality Scheme 2011-15 which was produced following the Equality Act 2010 becoming law.

The Corporate Equality Scheme consisted of three parts, detailed in the appendix to the report as follows:

- Part 1 outlined the Council's approach to the equality and diversity agenda, achievements to date and introduced the overarching themes of the forward looking equality objectives for 2015-19;
- Part 2 contained the Council's objectives and explained the five high level themes; and

- Part 3 summarised the legislative context of the Scheme and provided further more detailed information on the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the Corporate Equality Scheme 2015-19 be approved.**

### **17. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Learning, Skills and Economic Growth) and the Assistant Executive Director (Education) explaining that on 24 June 2015, Executive Cabinet had approved a consultation on amending the determined admission arrangements for community high schools for entry in September 2016 to replace the current criterion 4 with specified feeder schools linked to each community secondary school. In addition, any viable alternative put forward would be considered to ensure the Council had fair admission arrangements compliant with the School Admissions Code, whilst managing the statutory duty to ensure the local authority was able to provide a place for every Tameside resident of school age.

Having carefully considered a number of options to ensure compliance with the Code, it was reported that the best option for Tameside community high schools was to implement partner schools and three models were described as follows:

- All Tameside community, voluntary controlled and Church of England voluntary aided primary schools as partner schools for all six community high schools;
- To mirror the school place planning areas and name partner schools on a wider geographical area; and
- To have a number of partner primary schools for high schools so that each primary school was a partner school for a set number of high schools.

There were advantages and disadvantages with each of these three approaches but the responsibility of the Council in setting its oversubscription criteria was to be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair and compliant with all relevant legislation including equalities legislation.

The consultation on a proposal to implement a system of named partner schools for the six community high schools ran from 25 June to 6 August 2015 and details of the eight responses to the consultation were provided together with the proposed recommended changes following the consultation.

The School Admissions Code required admission authorities to consult on changes to their admission arrangements on an annual basis. It was proposed that the whole admission arrangements should be the subject of public consultation for admission in September 2017 so that parents and other interested parties had an opportunity to comment further on partner primary schools as an oversubscription criterion for community secondary schools.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) That criterion 4 of the secondary school admission arrangements for September 2016 be amended to:**

***Children attending the named partner primary school at the time of application. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.***

***When a parent has moved from further than ½ mile to an address within ½ mile of a named partner school, whilst their child is in Year 5 or 6 and they have chosen to keep their child at their current primary school, this will be considered as an exceptional circumstance under criterion 4, provided details are given on the special circumstances form together with satisfactory evidence of the house move.***

- (ii) **That the named partner primary schools detailed in Appendix 2 were partner (feeder) schools for the purposes of the school admission arrangements for September 2016.**

## **18. MARKETS POLICY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Executive Leader and the Assistant Executive Director (Environmental Services) outlining a proposed Market Policy covering:

- Provisions available to the Local Authority for the creation of a lawful market;
- Powers available for maintaining operational control, order and public safety on markets that take place within the borough;
- Procedures for monitoring trader compliance and detailing non-compliance; and
- Definitions of Market Franchise Rights, what constituted a rival market and the disturbance of Market Rights.

Tameside had a rich heritage of markets and their economic, cultural and social benefits could not be underestimated and they contributed to a mix of retail opportunities offering an alternative to mainstream shopping options. A recent report commissioned by the Association of British Market Authorities included survey data and research from visits to Ashton Market and 5 others from around the country. This independent research along with the knowledge of the value of Tameside's markets reinforced the need to ensure there was a quality market offer across the borough.

It was reported that there had been an increase in commercial interest in the use of markets as ways to generate income from all sectors of the community and it was important that the Council could clearly demonstrate a fair, consistent and transparent policy when dealing with such interest. Maintaining public protection and shoppers' confidence was a priority within the borough. One of the main benefits of the proposed policy was to consolidate information, rules, regulations and elements of law which Tameside Markets Service already adhered to and implemented into one document that was transparent and clearly setting out what was required.

The Council had undertaken a range of consultation activities in relation to the Market Policy including how other authorities approached the control / licensing of commercial and non-commercial events / markets with their areas. In addition, a survey had been sent out to the Tameside Citizens Panel and the questions and responses were detailed.

It was explained that the introduction of the Market Policy would enable charity / community groups to receive regulatory guidance from the Authority as well as establishing a line of communication with the Markets Service. The Service was also looking to extend its offer of specialist markets and events at venues across the borough and following soft market testing to gauge potential interest from potential partners, the Service was moving towards a procurement exercise which it was hoped would be finalised by the end of the calendar year.

### **RESOLVED**

**That the Market Policy be approved for adoption by the Council.**

## **19. DEFERRED PAYMENT AND CHARGING POLICY**

The Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Wellbeing) and the Interim Assistant Executive Director (Adults Services) submitted a report which explained that the Care Act 2014 placed a number of duties and responsibilities on local councils when considering charging for adult social care services including residential and on-residential care (such as homecare, day care and respite care). The Act continued to allow the Council some discretion as to what services they could charge for and what income, savings and assets could be taken into account when calculating a person's ability to pay for their care.

Executive Cabinet was informed that the Council had a charging policy and deferred payments policy that had been in place for many years. This report followed an extensive review of the previous policies together with two consultation exercises engaging with the general Tameside population and with the current users of adult social care services to ensure they remained fair and equitable.

Particular reference was made to the key areas for discretion the Council had when determining a charging policy, an explanation as to why the changes were required and responses to consultation on the following:

- Charging for temporary or short term care up to the first 8 weeks as if the person was living in permanent residential care;
- Income that was disregarded from a financial assessment;
- Upper and lower capital limits;
- Charging for care and support outside of a care home setting;
- Disability related expenses – standard disregard;
- Maximum percentage of disposable income;
- Personal Independence Payments; and
- Severe Disability Premium.

In respect of deferred payments, a key element within the Care Act was to allow people to make a choice as to when they decided to pay their care costs. A person could postpone making the payment to such a time as they felt able to pay or on their death where their estate would be used to pay off any outstanding debt the person might have accrued. A number of discretionary elements had been consulted on separately and had been the subject of a key decision earlier in the year. However, there remained a few discretionary elements that had been consulted upon and these together with the responses were highlighted as follows:

- Deferring third party top-ups;
- Extending deferred payments to Supported Living Scheme; and
- Renting out a property that was subject to Deferred Payments Agreement.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the proposed discretionary elements of the Charging for Adult Social Care Police and Deferred Payment Policy be approved.**
- (ii) That the Charging for Adult Services Policy be approved.**
- (iii) That the Deferred Payments Policy be approved.**
- (iv) That the policies be kept under review by the Executive Director (People) and Executive Director (Governance and Resources) and updated accordingly to ensure legal compliance should the legislation and guidance require their amendment.**

#### **20. COMMUNITY RESPONSE SERVICES CHARGING AND BANDING CONSULTATION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Wellbeing) and the Interim Assistant Executive Director (Adult Services), which explained that as the Council faced significant budgetary challenges over the coming years new and innovative approaches to delivering services whilst reducing the cost of provision significantly were being considered. The Community Response Service currently generated income from charges of £528,000. The Council supplemented this income with core funding of £373,000, which was being reduced by £175,000 during 2015/16 and £420,000 during 2016/17.

The Community Response Service supported some of the most vulnerable citizens across the borough with a monitoring and response service through the use of a community alarm and telecare devices. There were currently 4072 clients using the service, within 3776 properties. The current charge of £5.90 per week for a 24 hour service included a wide range of telecare devices

installed to individual needs and monitored and maintained. The Service generated an income from 1,716 properties as private clients paid £5.90 per week per household.

Attention was drawn to an options appraisal that had been undertaken and, based on the current financial situation, the recommended model would be that of income generation and to introduce charges for those individuals who currently did not pay for the service. This option made the most financial sense in terms of retaining a Community Response Service locally and coupled with other efficiencies, would offer a degree of security for the sustainability of the service.

Approval was being sought from the Executive Cabinet to commence consultation using written correspondence explaining the proposed changes, a questionnaire seeking feedback on the proposed changes and meetings with key stakeholders affected by the proposals. A similar letter and questionnaire had also been drafted for Key Safe proposals. The staff in the Community Response Service and Control Centre would be fully briefed and support would be provided to individuals who might have difficulties communicating their views including those people with sensory disabilities.

Consultation would take place with New Charter Housing Trust, tenants, private and owner occupiers and registered social landlords to cease funding the Community Response Service through the Adult Services budget and charge all customers using the service offering a two tier / band service offer.

The report was also seeking approval to consult with New Charter Housing Trust regarding a charge to monitor door entries to their sheltered schemes.

In conclusion, although there appeared to be a strong justification for the change it was important that consultation take place on the proposals and for customers to be involved in the design of the service if it was to meet customer needs in the future.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That approval be given to commence consultation with the 2060 customers currently receiving Community Response Services free of charge with a view to introducing the standard charge of £5.90 per week for services provided.**
- (ii) That approval be given for consultation to commence with customers and the wider public on the exploration of different service options offering different levels of provision at different levels of cost providing a greater range and choice of service options.**
- (iii) That approval be given for consultation to commence on changes to key storage arrangements whereby the customer would purchase a key safe for storage of house keys.**
- (iv) That approval be given to New Charter Housing Trust being approached to discuss charges for monitoring the door entry systems at their sheltered housing schemes across the borough.**

#### **21. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**

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### STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8 September 2015

Commenced: 4.00 pm

Terminated: 5.10 pm

**Present:** Mrs Valerie Bracken (Chair)

Councillors M Smith and J Lane, Town Councillor D Aylett and Mrs J Barnes

**Also in attendance:** Sandra Stewart, Executive Director, Governance and Resources (Monitoring Officer)

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors Bell, Kitchen and S Quinn and the Chief Executive

#### 1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Town Councillor Dean Aylett, Mossley Parish Council representative, to this his first meeting of the Standards Committee.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by members of the Standards Committee.

#### 3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Standards Committee held on 17 March 2015 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

In relation to Minute 21 – Code of Conduct for Campaigners: Electoral Registration, Postal Voting, Proxy Voting and Polling Stations – the Executive Director (Governance and Resources) was pleased to advise that all candidates and agents had signed up to and complied with the Code of Conduct to ensure the ethical governance relating to the process was maintained at the Parliamentary, Local and Parish Elections held on Thursday 7 May 2015 and no complaints had been received. The Chair added her thanks to candidates and agents for complying with the Code of Conduct during the elections.

Reference was also made to guidance issued asking those involved in campaign activity to adhere to general principles around the use of social media. It was recognised that the use of social media was a powerful tool for encouraging voter participation and communicating quickly and directly with electors. It presented both opportunities and challenges and particular care had to be taken to ensure the requirements of electoral law were met.

#### 4. ETHICAL INDUCTIONS ARE A GOOD WAY TO START

The Executive Director (Governance and Resources) introduced her report explaining that the new Parliamentary term began with 177 first-time MPs taking up their seats in Westminster and as new public office holders officially signed up to the Seven Principles of Public Life. The Committee on Standards in Public Life stated that their research confirmed that these principles represented the

public's expectation of the standards of behaviour of those who served them. Last year, the Committee on Standards in Public Life reported on the fact that Parliament was behind the curve in terms of ethical induction and called for this to be addressed. The challenge was to heighten awareness of the ethical principles, and to do so across the political system and this required a degree of cross-party commitment.

In line with this Tameside's newly elected Councillors also had undertaken an induction programme including being advised on standards and ethics. All elected Councillors received an email copy of the IDeA's Councillors Guide (**Appendix A**) published, April 2015. The IDeA, owned by the Local Government Association, was the lead on local government improvement. The new edition of the 'Councillor's Guide', which has been revised and updated to reflect the latest legislation and thinking concerning local government in England, provided information on:

- being a councillor;
- civic life;
- community leadership; and
- useful contacts.

The Guide had been provided at Tameside to all new members on induction and was also being used as an induction tool for new employees as a useful resource for understanding the legislative and political framework within which local government operated.

The Committee was pleased to note that all newly elected members had received ethical framework training and had asked questions about registering their interests correctly and appropriately. The 100% turnout for the sessions was also very positive.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the report be noted and that all newly elected members had received ethical framework training.**

### **5. GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT FOR MOSSLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

The Monitoring Officer introduced a report presenting and summarising two documents on guidance provided to the Clerk and the new Mossley Town Parish Council following the elections on 7 May 2015.

Nationally, principal local authorities continued to receive comments and concerns about activity of parish councils in their areas. Accordingly, the Council had taken steps to support the Clerk to the Parish Council by providing advice and a copy of the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks publication which is an important guide for parish councillors together with guidance on governance and accountability to share with the Town Councillor to ensure they properly understood their role and the ethical framework within which they operated.

Standards Committee Members also noted the contents of a second document, designed primarily as an aide memoire for Parish and Town Council Clerks to help ensure good governance. It provided helpful and useful advice that equally applied to a Metropolitan Council.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the guidance received by the Mossley Town Council for the new Parish Council elected for 5 years on 7 May 2015 to ensure that Town Councillors were kept up to date with the standards and ethical framework agenda be noted. It was also agreed that the Clerk to the Standards Committee would email the Committee's agendas and reports to the Clerk to share as appropriate with the Town Council**

## 6. CHARITY COMMISSION – NEW GUIDANCE ON TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance and Resources) explaining that the Charity Commission had consulted on a new draft version of their guidance last autumn, and whilst most people who responded said they found it helpful and preferred it to the previous version, a significant minority felt it needed a more supportive tone. The Commission had listened to this feedback and felt it achieved the right balance in making it clearer to trustees what the law expected of them. Being a trustee was a serious responsibility, and many of the Council's elected members as community leaders took on this role either on behalf of the Council or to support their local communities. The updated 'Essential trustee' broke down the trustee's role into 6 clear duties:

- ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit;
- comply with your charity's governing document and the law;
- act in your charity's best interests;
- manage your charity's resources responsibly;
- act with reasonable care and skill; and
- ensure your charity is accountable.

Under each heading, the Commission explained the legal requirements that trustees must meet, and the good practice they needed to follow, to operate effectively and comply with their duties.

The Committee heard that even if someone had been a trustee for many years, they would still benefit from looking at the new guidance and brushing up on their legal duties and essential good practice. The Commission made it clear that trustees were expected to follow good practice, applying it appropriately to their charity's circumstances.

The Charity Commission had found that serious concerns about a charity had their root causes in weak governance and trustees had failed to comply with their governing document, dealing with conflicts of interest, or implementing sufficient procedures and controls. It created opportunities for serious wrongdoing such as fraud or abuse of beneficiaries. The new guidance provided practical examples of how to avoid some common pitfalls, for example, ensuring a trustee understood the governing document, asked questions and understood the charity's finances.

Standards Committee Members commented that it was important for Elected Members in Tameside to feel confident when agreeing to be trustees of a charity that they understood the rules to ensure the charity was running in a legal, accountable and effective way and would support a training session being arranged on the new guidance. In addition, it was suggested that this subject should also be included in the induction programme for newly elected members.

### RESOLVED

- (i) **That the guidance be shared with Elected Members and a training session be arranged in conjunction with other GM authorities for Elected Members who were trustees of charities.**
- (ii) **That the guidance also be included in the induction programme for newly elected members.**

## 7. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Committee recalled that they have previously approved guidance and training for both members and staff about the benefits of Social Media and also the pitfalls. The Equality and Human Rights Commission had issued a guide that explained the legal framework, which protected freedom of expression and the circumstances in which that freedom might be restricted in order to prevent violence, abuse or discrimination.

The guidance explored the boundaries between freedom of expression, unlawful discrimination and harassment, and hate speech. It also considered various contexts in which freedom of expression was curtailed. There were, of course, other aspects of the right to freedom of expression (such as privacy, libel and defamation) which would be covered in future publications.

There is considerable debate at both national and international levels about what types of contentious language or communication should be either permitted or prohibited.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have therefore set out in this guidance the legal framework in Great Britain.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the guidance be communicated more widely and a simple guidance note be produced by the Council's communications team for sharing with Elected Members and staff.**

### **8. DELIVERING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Executive Director (Governance and Resources) presented a report advising that the CIPFA/SOLACE Joint Working Group on Good Governance in Local Government was consulting on a revised Framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

Local authorities were set for further reductions in government funding over the course of this Parliament and to cope in this time of unprecedented change, they would need to continue to adapt the way in which they operated. Local authorities had responded to austerity through increased collaboration; developing their role as 'enablers' and making further use of alternative delivery vehicles for public service provision.

It was therefore crucial that Leaders and Chief Executives kept their governance arrangements up to date and relevant. In response, CIPFA and SOLACE were undertaking a fundamental review of the Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government to ensure that it remained 'fit for purpose'. The main principle underpinning the development of the new Framework continued to be that local government was developing and shaping its own approach to governance, taking account of the environment in which it now operated.

The revised Framework also built on the *International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC 2014)*. The *International Framework* placed sustainable economic, societal and environmental outcomes as a key focus for governance processes and structures. It emphasised the importance of considering the longer term and the links between governance and public financial management – all key considerations for local authorities in today's climate.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the intention of the Greater Manchester Lawyers to respond to the consultation questions to enable this key governance guidance be noted.**

### **9. REGISTER OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

The Executive Director (Governance and Resources) advised that the Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality were available at the meeting for inspection. She advised that she intended to refresh the Council's protocol for circulation to Elected Members and employees reminding them of the Council's expectations on gifts and hospitality.

## **10. DISCUSSION PERIOD**

The following items were raised during the discussion period:

### ***Transfer of Children's 0-5 years public health services***

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the transfer of health commissioning responsibilities for children aged 0-5 from NHS England to local authorities on the 1 October 2015, the Executive Director (Governance and Resources) advised that the Council had commenced its planning for the transfer some months ago. It was working closely with its partners on commissioning responsibilities including financial allocations, implementing and monitoring a workforce plan and understanding the impact this would have on families in Tameside.

### ***Local News Publications***

Mrs Barnes stated that the Tameside Advertiser and The Citizen, the Council's quarterly news publication, both valuable sources for local information, were no longer being delivered in her area. The Executive Director (Governance and Resources) advised that a review of how the Council engaged with the public including the distribution of the The Citizen was being undertaken and she agreed to keep Standards Committee members updated.

## **11. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair advised that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

## **12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that future meetings of the Standards Committee would take place on the following dates:

Tuesday 8 December 2015

Tuesday 5 April 2016

**CHAIR**

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## ITEM NO: 8

### OVERVIEW (AUDIT) PANEL

27 July 2015

Commenced: 2.00pm

Terminated: 2.50pm

**Present:** Councillor Ricci (Chair)

Councillors Bailey, Buckley, Fairfoull, I Miah, Peet, K Quinn and Taylor

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors J Fitzpatrick, Kitchen and Welsh

#### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview (Audit) Panel held on 24 November 2014 were signed as a correct record.

#### 3. SCRUTINY REPORTS

##### (a) Review of Volunteering and Engaging the Community

Consideration was given to the outcome of the review of Volunteering and Engaging the Community undertaken by the Supporting People and Resources Scrutiny Panel, which explored the current approach towards volunteering and engaging the community in Tameside.

The Executive response of the Deputy Executive Leader was appended to the report.

#### RESOLVED

**That the recommendations in Section 9 of the report and the executive response at Appendix 1 to the report, where all the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel were accepted together with a timeframe for implementation, be noted.**

##### (b) Review of Care Home Services in Tameside

Consideration was given to the outcome of the review of Smoking in Tameside undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing Improvement Scrutiny Panel, which explored the effect of smoking on Tameside residents and the effectiveness of services that assisted residents to stop smoking.

The Executive response of the Executive Member (Health and Neighbourhoods) was appended to the report.

#### RESOLVED

**That the recommendations in Section 9 of the report and the Executive response at Appendix 1 to the report, where all the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel were accepted together with a timeframe for implementation, be noted.**

#### **4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY PANELS 2014/15**

The Executive Director (Governance and Resources) submitted a report, copies of which had been circulated, detailing the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Panels for 2014/15, which informed the Council and the community of Tameside about their work during the past year. The report also contained a foreword of the Scrutiny function by the Executive Leader and Chief Executive, which explained the valuable role that Scrutiny played within the Council.

It was reported that the Scrutiny Panels would continue to strengthen relationships with partners across all sections of the local economy to identify more intelligent ways of working and regularly monitor the progress of services, reviewing the way recommendations were actioned, helping to make Tameside a better place for all. The Chair of each Scrutiny Panel also submitted a summary of the work carried out by each of the Panels.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

#### **5. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMES FOR THE SCRUTINY PANELS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/16**

The Executive Director (Governance and Resources) submitted a report, copies of which had been circulated, which gave details of the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programmes for 2015/16, as approved and adopted by the Members of the Scrutiny Panel concerned.

It was explained that the Scrutiny Panels' Work Programmes were linked to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and the Work Programmes also included reviews that sought to check on the effective implementation of the Council's policies and made recommendations to the Executive with regards to development, performance monitoring and value for money.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Annual Work Programmes for the Scrutiny Panels for the Municipal year 2015/16 be noted.**

#### **6. GRANT THORNTON – ASSURANCE FROM OVERVIEW (AUDIT) PANEL CHAIR AND MANAGEMENT 2014/15**

The Assistant Executive Director (Finance) submitted a report, copies of which had been circulated, which explained that Grant Thornton as part of their risk assessment procedures were required to obtain an understanding of management processes in relation to fraud risk assessment, laws and regulations and going concern considerations as part of their annual audit.

The report presented the response to the letters and questionnaires received from Grant Thornton for consideration by the Panel ahead of the document being signed by the Chair of the Panel and the Assistant Executive Director of Finance.

**RESOLVED**

**That the schedule be signed by both the Chair of the Overview (Audit) Panel and the Assistant Executive Director (Finance) ahead of it being provided to Grant Thornton.**

#### **7. AUDIT PLAN**

The Panel welcomed representatives of Grant Thornton LLP, External Auditor, who presented their audit plan for Tameside MBC for the year ended March 2015.



The report outlined the challenges and opportunities the Council was facing and considered the impact of key developments in the sector, whilst taking account of national audit requirements as set out in the Code of Audit Practice.

The audit approach was outlined including the focus on risk with any significant and other risks identified. The result of interim audit work was detailed alongside key dates of the audit cycle and value for money.

**RESOLVED**

**That the audit approach be noted.**

**8. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**

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**OVERVIEW (AUDIT) PANEL****21 September 2015****Commenced: 3.00pm****Terminated: 3.35pm**

**Present: Councillor Ricci (Chair)**  
**Councillors, Buckley, Fairfoull, J Fitzpatrick, Peet, and Taylor**

**Apologies for absence: Councillors Bailey, I Miah, K Quinn and Welsh.**

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview (Audit) Panel held on 27 July 2014 were signed as a correct record.

**3. CAPITAL MONITORING – OUTTURN 2014/15**

The Assistant Executive Director (Finance) submitted a report, which detailed the Council's capital programme for 2014/15 showing the outturn position for the year. It was reported that total spend for 2014/15 was £37.5million, which had resulted in the need for £4.069million of the capital programme to be re-profiled.

It was explained that the actual spend in 2014/2015 of £37.5m represented 90% of the budget compared to 75% of the budget being spent in 2013/2014.

The key aspects of the report were highlighted to the Panel including analysis of capital expenditure over three years, summary of variations by service area and interest rate differential between borrowing and investment rates.

Details of the variation totalling £4.069m were set out by service area in **appendix 1** to the report.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the capital outturn position for 2014/15 be approved;**
- (ii) That the capital financing statement for 2014/15 be approved; and**
- (iii) That the revised capital programme for 2015/16 – 2017/18 be noted.**

**4. REVENUE MONITORING – OUTTURN 2014/15**

The Assistant Executive Director (Finance) submitted a report, which demonstrated that the overall net revenue expenditure in the 2014/15 financial year had exceeded the allocated budget by £2.506m in line with previous forecasts.

It was stated that strong budget management was required to ensure that the Council achieved its financial plans. This was set in the context of challenging savings targets: £13m for 2014/15 and a further £24m and £14.1m planned for 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively. Detailed analysis on the

achievement/non-achievement of savings targets in 2014/15 was included for each service area within the report.

The Panel heard that as at the end of March 2015 Council Tax collection rates were slightly below target and the Business Rate collection rate had slightly exceeded the target.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the revenue outturn position for 2014/15 be noted;**
- (ii) That the detail for each service area be noted;**
- (iii) That the savings achieved in each area be noted; and**
- (iv) That the changes to the in-year and future year revenue budgets be approved.**

**5. TREASURY MANAGEMENT – OUTTURN 2014/15**

The Assistant Executive Director (Finance) submitted a report that set out the treasury management activities for the financial year 2014/15. The report set out:

- a) how the treasury function was managed during the year and how this compared to the agreed strategy.
- b) the transactions made in the year;
- c) the position with regard to loans and investments at 31 March 2015; and
- d) the outturn position of the Council's prudential indicators.

The Panel were informed that as investment interest rates were lower than external borrowing rates throughout the year cash reserves had been utilised to fund internal borrowing, which had resulted in lower than anticipated borrowing costs.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the treasury management activities be noted; and**
- (ii) That the outturn position for the prudential indicators be approved.**

**6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2014/15**

The Assistant Executive Director (Finance) submitted the Annual Governance Statement for 2014/15, which was a requirement of Regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011. It required authorities to 'conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control' and 'following the review, the body must approve an annual governance statement prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control'.

The Panel were informed that the Annual Governance Statement was based on:-

- ET Assurance Self Assessments and signed Assurance Statements;
- Head of Audit's Annual Report;
- ET Budget and Assurance Statements;
- Review of System of Internal Audit;
- Annual Audit Letter;
- Review of the Role of the Chief Financial Officer;
- Review of the Role of the Head of Internal Audit;
- Corporate Plan
- Community Strategy; and
- Statutory Inspections.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Annual Governance Statement for 2014/15 be approved.**

## 7. AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT (ISA260) – TAMESIDE MBC AND GREATER MANCHESTER PENSION FUND 2014/15

The Assistant Executive Director (Finance) submitted a report, which summarised the results of the 2013/14 audit of the accounts of both Tameside MBC and Greater Manchester Pension Fund, which the External Auditor was required to report under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice and International Standard of Auditing.

The Panel were aware that subsequent to the Department of Communities and Local Government announcing that the Audit Commission had been wound up, the audit work within the North West Region was now being carried out by Grant Thornton.

The report explained that this year, had again proved to be a very challenging year to close the accounts. The finance team had continued to reduce in size following the previous service review and efficiencies had needed to be embedded into the closure process for 2013/14.

Despite the challenges, the year-end closure of the accounts and the subsequent external audit process had been completed within the statutory timescales and the conclusion of the audit indicated that the accounts continued to be prepared to a high degree of accuracy and reliability. The auditors had been very positive about the overall quality of the accounts and they had commented on the high level of support given by Council officers.

A small number of adjustments and presentational changes were recommended in the report of the External Auditor, which the External Auditors confirmed related to form not substance (attached to the report at **Appendix 1**). Members were advised that none of the amendments altered the reported surplus on the general fund reserve balance. A number of changes were made to improve the disclosure notes to the financial statements, but had no impact on the overall financial position of the Council.

The formal response to the recommendations arising from the audit were set out in the draft letter of representation included in the report.

Members were further informed of a requirement that the auditor provide a value for money conclusion, based on two criteria:

- (i) Proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience; and
- (ii) Proper arrangements for challenging how it secured economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The outcome of this review was attached to the report at Appendix 1. The key findings from which were as follows:

- The External Auditor had issued an unqualified value for money conclusion stating that the Council had proper arrangements for challenging how it secured economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources;
- The Council remained better placed compared to most peer authorities to deal with the current and anticipated financial environment within Local Government.; and
- The Council was responding well to the challenges of the Local Government Finance Settlement, delivering savings and targeting its resources effectively.

The Auditors commented that the revised presentation of the accounts were welcomed and made there more accessible and a complex budget understandable to the public. They were complimentary of the work undertaken to achieve this.

In response to a question about the level of reserves the Auditors confirmed that as set out in their report the reserves were adequate. They could say no more than that other than acknowledging the Council faced significant financial challenges and noting the nature of the Council's pressures including an aging population and increasing the demand for services for safeguarding children and vulnerable adult, which had meant that the Council had been unable to deliver £10 million of planned services. They further went onto say that like a number of councils nationally it would be

necessary for the Council to keep the reserves under review to ensure they remain adequate given the circumstances of challenging budget reduction plans and further expected cuts to budgets.

It was also asked whether the Council were able to do more to increase collection of a Council tax. The Executive Director of Governance and a Resources advised that we were considering all forms of recovery and whether there was any other best practice we could follow recognising that in terms of performance, the Council had the 2nd best performance of collection so far this financial year. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged the final position of recovery was reflective of the financial position of our residents rather than a reflection of our recovery process. This was evidenced by fact that obviously wealthier boroughs being clearly able to collect more. Whilst the Council has clear enforcement action, bailiffs were unable to recover where residents had no assets.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the content of the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the positive relationship with the audit team and successful progress of the audit be noted;**
- (iii) That the minor amendments and presentational changes to the accounts be agreed;**
- (iv) That the action plan contained within the report be agreed;**
- (v) That the value for money conclusion be noted; and**
- (vi) That the Council had complied with all matters set out in the Letter of Representation and that a signed copy be forwarded to the External Auditor.**

#### **8. AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2014/15**

The Assistant Executive Director (Finance) submitted a report detailing the Audited Statement of Accounts for Tameside MBC and Greater Manchester Pension Fund for 2014/15 consistent with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The Panel were notified that the pre-audit Statement of Accounts had been certified by the Assistant Executive Director (Finance) on 30 June 2015 and the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton had since audited the accounts.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the audited statement of accounts for 2014/15 be approved;**
- (ii) That the summary annual accounts for 2014/15 be approved; and**
- (iii) That the level of reserves held by Tameside MBC be noted.**

#### **9. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**

## ITEM NO: 9

### DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

27 JULY 2015

Commenced: 3.00pm

Terminated: 4.10pm

**Present:** Councillors Cooney (In the Chair), P. Buckley, Cooney, Fairfoull, K. Quinn, Taylor and Warrington

**Apology** for Councillors J. Fitzpatrick  
**Absence:**

#### 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

##### AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2015 be accepted as a correct record.

#### 2. REVIEW OF 2015 ELECTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance), which provided an assessment of administration on the 2015 Combined Parliamentary and Local Elections. It was explained that the 2015 Parliamentary, Local and Parish elections were the first such combination and administratively the most complicated for a long time. Across the three Parliamentary Constituencies it had been necessary to make use of approximately 150 buildings and over 600 temporary staff. In addition there were 113 candidates and over 200,000 electors, with over 50,000 postal votes. The elections were also the first since the introduction of individual electoral registration.

Members were informed that each year the Electoral Commission selected a sample of Returning Officers for detailed monitoring. For the 2015 elections Tameside was one of a sample of Returning Officers who were asked to submit evidence of how they were meeting performance standards throughout the election period, Tameside had been chosen because of the extent of the combination of polls. This involved submitting copies of plans and documentation that had been put in place. Members were informed that following the elections, the Electoral Commission had written to the Returning Officer to confirm that Tameside had met all the performance standards.

The report set out in detail the issues which had arisen during the elections, with particular reference being made to the following:

**Individual Electoral Registration (IER)** – IER had introduced important changes to the system of electoral registration. In practical terms IER placed considerable strain on the election team in the weeks leading up to the registration deadline due to the uncertainty on the part of the electors as to whether they or not they were registered.

**Fixed-term Parliaments Act** – The Act meant that there was a greater certainty as to when Parliament could be dissolved and when the election would take place and the timetable that had to be followed.

**Communications** – During the election period the Returning Officer continued the usual practice of sharing significant amounts of information prior to nominations and during the campaign via regular email alerts. This approach continued to work well with positive feedback being received particularly from candidates and agents in Failsworth and Reddish, who do not normally receive such information during the local elections.

**Nominations** – Members were informed that two specific issues impacted on the nomination process. Firstly guidance was issued by the Electoral Commission during the nomination process

concerning the use of commonly used names on the ballot paper which could have impacted on the validity of already received nomination papers. Secondly, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens changed their logos during the nomination period, which caused delays in the production of ballot papers and the signing off of details of candidates after the close of nominations.

**Polling Stations** – for the 2015 elections there were 150 polling stations used of which 5 were mobile polling stations, this included 18 polling stations in Reddish North and South and 11 in Failsworth East and West. Appended to the report was a breakdown of the elector numbers for each polling station together with the actual number of electors who voted. Members were informed that prior to the elections all schools to be used as polling stations had been visited to check facilities and ensure that there was clarity about the room and access to be used. This had been a time consuming process especially as schools continued to challenge why they were being used and in some cases hadn't made adequate, timely arrangements in the belief that alternative arrangements would be made if they didn't co-operate.

**Staffing** – It was explained that a Parliamentary election presented significant challenges in recruiting staff as the complexity and scale meant that it was necessary to employ significantly more staff than at other elections. Over the past three years a large number of Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Polling Station Inspectors have been replaced. The reduction in the Local Authority workforce by 40% had a significant impact on election recruitment. It was felt that the revised arrangements and additional input had worked well this year.

**Postal Votes** – Postal Votes in Tameside (and Failsworth and Reddish) were distributed on 17 April, the remainder of Greater Manchester postal votes were sent out a week later. In the Electoral Commission's report on the administration of the 7 May elections they recommended maximising the time available to electors to receive, complete and return their postal vote, Tameside postal votes were sent out as early as possible. For the Tameside area postal vote returns totalled 28,899 (80.5%). Members were also informed that the total number of postal votes rejected during the verification stage was 792 (2.3%). The report contained a breakdown of rejected postal votes by ward.

**Campaign Issues** – all candidates and agents had received, amongst other things, a revised Code of Conduct for campaigners. Amongst the provisions the Code made clear that campaigners should not handle completed postal vote applications as well as not handling actual postal votes.

**Arrangements for the Count** – Members were reminded that the principle of one count venue for Tameside had received widespread support amongst candidates and agents. It was explained that for the 2015 elections, due to the nature of the counts, Dukinfield Town Hall was not suitable and an alternative venue had to be found that was sufficiently large to accommodate three parliamentary counts, 19 borough counts and the parish count as well as the large number of candidates and agents. The venue chosen had been Unit 7, Plantation Industrial Estate as it provided enough space for undertaking the count, all candidates, agents and staff and storing and moving of boxes and paperwork. The response to the venue had been overwhelmingly positive.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the update be noted;
- (ii) That all staff involved in the delivery of the elections be thanked for their contribution to successful running of the elections;
- (iii) That Unit 7, Plantation Industrial Estate be the preferred venue for conducting the 2016 election count with Dukinfield Town Hall as the contingency venue.

### **3. INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance), which provided an update on the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration. Members were reminded that by law the transition to IER in Great Britain, which began in Summer 2014, would end on 1 December 2015. At that point any entries for electors who were not registered individually, that is those who



had not either been confirmed or successfully made individual applications to register to vote would be removed from the register.

It was explained that if transition ended immediately 1.9 million entries would be removed from registers nationally, in Tameside 7,830 would be removed from the register. It was likely that many of the entries that would be removed from the register when the transition ended would be redundant (i.e. they related to people who were no longer resident at the address). However, it was not possible to be certain how many were in fact for electors who were still resident and eligible to be registered to vote but who were not registered individually.

The registers published on 1 December 2015 would form the basis of the registers to be used at the May 2016 elections. In addition, the 1 December 2015 registers would be used for determining the distribution and boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and other electoral areas.

Nationally, the December 2014 registers contained approximately 920,000 fewer entries than the registers published in February 2014, which indicated a decrease of approximately 2%. In Tameside the figures were 168,749 on the December 2014 register (following the canvass) and 171,605 in February 2014 a fall of 2,856 (1.7%). In light of the fall in the numbers on the electoral register letters were sent to all properties in the Borough in March 2015 explaining who was registered to vote at the property and action required if the information was incorrect. Prior to the write out the local electorate in Tameside was 168,749, after the write out the electorate was 169,990 an increase of 1,241.

Members were informed that in the weeks preceding the closing date for registering to vote at the May 2015 elections there had been extensive publicity around the deadline and reasons for registering, this saw 1,186 additional people on the register, giving a local government electorate of 171,176 which is 429 less than was on the February 2014 register.

Members were informed that comprehensive household activity would be taking place from 1 July 2015 until the new register was published on 1 December 2015 and would involve sending out Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs) to all properties. The report set out the process for dealing with returned HEFs and for sending out Invitations to Register to new electors.

The report also informed Members of the Electoral Commission performance standards for the transition to IER. The Electoral Commission had informed the Electoral Registration Officer that they were confident that Tameside had in place the necessary strategies and plans to be able to meet the challenges of IER and meet the performance standards.

With regard to the 7,839 entries that were unconfirmed it was explained that responses being received during the canvass would impact on the number of unconfirmed electors. When initial responses to the canvass are processed reminders would be sent to all non-responders. At that time publicity would be undertaken aimed at encouraging registration and individually targeted communication to unconfirmed electors explaining that they needed to take action to ensure that they remained on the register.

**AGREED:**

**That the update be noted and it was agreed that Members would do all they could to support the electoral canvass process.**

**4. ELECTORAL COMMISSION REPORT: ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE OF RETURNING OFFICERS AT MAY 2015 ELECTIONS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance), which informed Members of the contents of the Electoral Commission report on the performance of Returning Officers at the May 2015 Elections. The report provided details of those Returning Officers that had failed to meet the Electoral Commission performance standards. Those Returning Officers

that the Commission rated as not meeting the standards encountered issues in one of more of the following areas:

- Ballot papers issued to those not entitled to receive them;
- Early dispatch of poll cards;
- Incorrect declaration of result;
- Issues with the allocation of electors to polling stations;
- Print errors with election material;
- Multiple errors.

It was noted that the Electoral Commission had confirmed that Tameside Council had meet all the performance standards fully.

## **RECOMMENDED**

**That the report be noted.**

## **5. ELECTORAL COMMISSION BULLETINS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance) which provided Members with recent copies of the Electoral Commission news bulletin which set out current issues affecting the democratic framework for local government.

## **AGREED:**

**That the report be noted.**

**CHAIR**