

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021 – 2022**

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# Introduction by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny - Councillor Anthony McAlmont

Article 6 Section 6.01 (13) requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report annually to Council on the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function. This report fulfils this Constitutional requirement. Whilst this annual report covers the period 2021/2022 (See Part A below), as this Administration comes to an end with the imminent elections on 5 May 2022, it also reflects briefly in this introduction on the last four years of scrutiny (See Part B below).

## A. The Last Year:

Overview and Scrutiny over the last year has played a key role as part of the Council's overall good governance framework. It has - as reflected on the agenda this evening - done robust scrutiny of the Council's budget. It has also done some significant thematic review work through time-limited Task and Finish Work Groups. For example, it has through a task and finish scrutiny commission looking at the relationship between black boys and the Borough started to look at the lived experience of black boys, considering all aspects of what it is like to be a black boy in the borough. In similar vein, a task and finish commission considering the Removal of Combustible Cladding from Residential Properties continues its crucial scrutiny in this area, so important to so many of our residents, and will in early March consider its annual report. A third important example is the in-depth work being done on the approach of the Marmot review of Health Inequalities. This covers both the key concepts that underlie the analysis of health inequalities in England and the recommendations which emerge from the evidence base. Tackling health inequalities is central not only to the overall work of the Council but also to this in-depth scrutiny work.

In addition to the task and finish scrutiny work, I want to spotlight a few areas across the breadth of scrutiny this last year - noting that this not a comprehensive summary but just a few highlights.

**The Regeneration, Housing and Environment Scrutiny Commission** has recently considered the Cabinet's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping 5-year strategy. This was an excellent opportunity for the Commission to follow up on work which had been undertaken previously on reviewing homelessness policy and action in the borough. The Commission was able to respond formally to the consultation of the 5 year strategy on 14 October 2021 and to provide comment and recommendations. These recommendations were formally accepted and included in the process of the development of the Homelessness 5 Year Strategy.

Another highlight was the commission response to the Newham City Farm proposals. The Commission held an extraordinary meeting in July 2021, reviewing issues relating to the Newham City Farm, options pertaining to its future, and Cabinet plans for the site. Based on the evidence the Commission took from key stakeholders, its recommendations were responded to by Cabinet. This work assured the Commission that all options had been carefully considered, that the community would be listened to as part of future consultation on the Beckton Parks masterplan, and that Cabinet considered the recommendations of scrutiny carefully.

**The Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Scrutiny Commission** has recently scrutinised the Youth Offending Team and its action plan. It also scrutinised the work of the Borough

Commander, questioning him on crime and disorder in the Borough. It will soon consider its State of the Borough Report, which will be an overview of the work of the Commission for 2021/22 including general crime and ASB, fly tipping, youth offending and the Community Safety Board.

**Through the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Commission** we have taken a close look at the work of Brighter Futures directorate holistic work around the journey of the Child. We have also been keeping a close eye on the ongoing improvement of Children's Services and its positive trajectory, an item that is regularly on our agenda's, together with Ofsted monitoring.

**The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission** has done excellent work throughout the year, including a focus on Health Inequalities and learning from the Marmot report. Due to report on 10 March 2022, its Health Inequalities Report is a collation of evidence from the Institute of the Health Equity, GLA (Health Team), City of Coventry and Newham's Public Team. It will propose some recommendations to support work consistent with the 50 Steps Strategy.

**The overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee** has recently looked at the improvement plan for procurement in the Council and continues to monitor quarterly Council and budget performance. It also considered flood management in the Borough, including a site visit to Thames Water drainage facilities in Newham. It has agreed the final report of the Budget Scrutiny Commission, a separate, so I won't dwell on it (again). It is also scheduled to agree the Annual Report for Scrutiny soon, a report which will be a compendium of achievement in scrutiny across the last four years.

And as if this is not enough, **the Scrutiny Commission looking at the Relationship between Black Boys and the Borough** has had three thematic meetings looking at aspects of the lived experience of Black Boys and will continue gathering evidence. I hope that the work of this Commission, given how important it is, will continue into the next administration, as it is unlikely that it will complete its work in the next month or two.

**The Scrutiny/Executive Protocol:** Agreed at the Annual General Meeting of Full Council at the end of May 2021, one year on from putting it in place I am pleased to say that broadly speaking the protocol is working well and whilst there is still work to do to fully operationalise it, it is bedding in. As recommended by the Budget Scrutiny Commission, it will be reviewed to take more fully into account learning from this year's budget scrutiny process.

**Co-optees and External Expertise:** We have continued to bolster the independence of scrutiny and strengthening its expertise by increasing the use of external co-optees both on the Budget Scrutiny Commission as well as the Commission looking at black boys. Scrutiny Chairs meet as a group twice a month to ensure the overall coherence and direction of the work programme, ensure synergies are appropriately identified and that the work programme is effectively managed. This goes a long way to ensuring the overall impact and success of the scrutiny work programme as a whole. I want to thank my scrutiny chair colleagues for the work they put into making scrutiny a success, and for all colleagues who have participated on Scrutiny Commissions either through scrutiny or the Executive coming to Scrutiny Commissions.

## **B. Four Years of Scrutiny:**

This Administration comes to an end with the elections on 5 May 2022. As such, I would like to reflect on some of the significant achievements over the last four years. During this four-year period, it is evident that the Council as a whole has embraced the foundational value of scrutiny.

A significant highlight of the last four years is the executive and Scrutiny jointly agreeing a Scrutiny/Executive protocol. A significant achievement, this document describes a mutually agreed value-driven relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny based on mutual respect and parity, trust and a shared commitment to the residents of Newham. Effective scrutiny is symbolic of a transparent, confident administration open to challenge and able to work collaboratively with all Members in the interests of Newham residents, and our administration, led by an innovative and dynamic Executive, is held to account by an equally innovative and progressive Scrutiny function. As an umbrella document regulating interaction between the two branches of local government, it has bedded in well since its adoption in May 2021. It will be adjusted in the months to come to make more nuanced provision for budget scrutiny based on lessons learned. The protocol can be read [here](#).

Ultimately though it is one thing to put in place a set of words – but the true test of those words – the protocol - will be in its systemic translation into value-driven behaviour underpinned by an ethos of collegiate yet appropriately critical accountability in the interest of Newham and its residents.

Another innovative milestone is the increased use of external expertise on Scrutiny Commissions. Known as co-optees, this is demonstrated through the longstanding role which statutory co-optees have contributed to our work – but also through the role independent co-optees have played in the Budget Working Party, the Scrutiny Commission looking at the Relationship between Black Boys and the Borough, as well as the Education, Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Commission to name a few. In this regard, our CIPFA and IFS appointments brought an unprecedented level of insight, expertise and rigour to our work and as such, is a model Scrutiny is well-advised to continue building on as it rolls out this approach more widely. Another real milestone for Overview and Scrutiny.

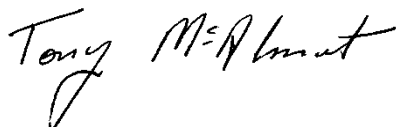
It is through in-depth reviews and the recommendations contained in final reports produced through the work of Councillors participating in these reviews that Scrutiny can have real impact. Perusing Annual Reports over the last four years highlights just how significant the themes of the reviews were, as well as the extensive amount of work done to truly put residents at the heart of all we do. Their cumulative impact is significant, and for ease of reference I include links to the annual reports of the last four years:

- 2021/2022: This report.
- [2019/2020 and 2020/2021](#)
- [2018/2019](#)

The global pandemic placed a pause on some of the work of the Scrutiny Commissions whilst scarce resources were directed at combating it. One such pause was that an Annual Report could not be presented last year. As noted last year, Scrutiny adopted a nimble and agile approach to scrutinising issues of importance to Newham residents through the rapid establishment of a Covid-19 Commission which reported recommendations to the Executive in an on-going manner.

I would like to thank the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions for the leadership role they have played on their Commissions over the last four years, as well as all Councillors who have actively participated in the work of the Scrutiny Commissions. During this time the Commissions have amassed a significant body of evidence across a wide range of themes, all translated into impactful recommendations for Executive consideration. None of this would have been possible without the active participation of Newham's Mayor and her Cabinet, for which I express my sincere gratitude. I also wish to express my deep thanks to the witnesses who came from all walks of life – individuals, voluntary groups, charities and non-profit organisations, as well as Council Partners, all of whom participated in the work of the Scrutiny Commissions. It is their voices, often marginalised by wider society that Scrutiny in particular amplifies through its work.

I commend this Scrutiny Annual Report to the Council.



**Councillor Anthony McAlmont**  
**Chair: Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

## Section A

# The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### A. Introductory Overview:

1. Newham Council has established a statutory [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) (OSC) to oversee the scrutiny function at Newham.
2. The OSC has established four thematic Scrutiny Commissions to discharge its functions, including those statutorily prescribed for Crime and Health.
3. The OSC establishes Scrutiny Task and Finish Commissions as required to undertake specific pieces of work. One of these, the Budget Scrutiny Commission has recently become a standing feature of the scrutiny landscape, meeting on an on-going basis to scrutinise the Council's budget. Its work is outlined in Section C below.
4. The OSC established a Covid-19 Commission to look at the impact of the pandemic and has also recently established a Cladding Commission to consider the removal of combustible cladding from residential properties in Newham.
5. The OSC has appointed Councillors to a single cross-Borough joint scrutiny committee, the Inner North East London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (INEL JOSOC), to look at cross-Borough issues pertaining to Health.
6. Besides the brief outline just provided, a useful introductory synopsis of scrutiny at Newham including its overall purpose, functions and membership can be read on the [Scrutiny website](#).
7. The minutes of all OSC meetings can be found by clicking [here](#). Meetings and associated reports can be browsed by year and month and serve as a repository of additional detail augmenting the summary contained in this annual report.
8. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, last year's annual report covered two years - 2019/20 and 2020/21 - given that some Council meetings were placed on hold during the pandemic as resources were refocused to enable the Council to combat the pandemic in the interests of residents. For example, Full Council meetings scheduled for 30 March 2020, 27 April 2020 and 15 June 2020 were cancelled. The Council AGM scheduled for 20 May 2020 was postponed.<sup>1</sup> This report, the last of a four year administration, will include highlights of all four years - May 2018 to May 2022.

### B. OSC Membership:

9. The membership of the OSC comprises Elected Members and Co-optees as statutorily and constitutionally prescribed. As of April 2022, OSC membership was as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The meeting record can be found here: [Browse meetings - Council \(newham.gov.uk\)](#)

**Chair:** Councillor Anthony McAlmont

**Councillors:**

Councillor Anthony McAlmont (Chair)  
 Councillor Daniel Lee-Phakoe (Vice-Chair)  
 Councillor Ayesha Chowdhury  
 Councillor Joshua Garfield  
 Councillor Ken Clark  
 Councillor Farah Nazeer  
 Councillor Mas Patel  
 Councillor Lakmini Shah  
 Councillor John Whitworth  
 Councillor Neil Wilson  
 Councillor Susan Masters

**Co-opted Members:**

- Ellen Kemp (Church of England)
- Paul Underwood (Roman Catholic)
- Paul Leslie (Independent co-optee)
- Matt Brooks (Independent co-optee)

**C. Review of OSC Meetings:**

10. Overall highlights include:

- **In-depth Scrutiny Policy Reviews/task and finish Commission reports:** At its meeting of 27 April 2021, the following were agreed:
  - The Serious Youth Violence and its Effects on Young Women in the Borough Review Report and Recommendations (Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Scrutiny Commission).
  - The Mental Health Services Review Report and Recommendations (Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission).
- **Additional highlights include:**
  - Agreement of the establishment, Terms of Reference and Membership of a Scrutiny Commission to scrutinise the relationship between Black Boys and the Borough (22 July 2021).
  - Consideration of the interim report of the Removal of Combustible Cladding from Residential Buildings Task and Finish Commission (OSC meeting 15 December 2021).
  - Scrutiny of an Improvement Plan for Procurement in the Council (OSC meeting 22 February 2022)
- **Monitoring Impact of Recommendations:** Reports agreed by the OSC generally make a number of recommendations to the Mayor and Executive and they will be reported on in a future Annual Report as part of the recommendations tracking process.
- **Scrutiny of Partners:** Following on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consideration of Newham's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) in March



2021, the OSC at its meeting on 15 December 2021 considered flooding mitigation and management of the infrastructure in the Borough with Thames Water.

- **Financial Oversight:** At its meeting on 22 July 2022, the OSC considered the July Financial Review for 2021/22, including the draft Statement of Accounts 2020/21, the financial position 2020/21 Outturn, Quarter One Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 and the Capital First Review 2021/22. Corporate and financial performance is reviewed on a quarterly basis and was again reviewed at the OSC meeting held on 18 November 2021. A final review of the overall Financial Position 2021/22, Quarter 3 Position was done on 22 February 2022.
- **Co-optees:** The deployment of co-optees throughout scrutiny, and in particular on the Education, Overview and Scrutiny and Budget Scrutiny Commissions has been significantly bolstered, to significant effect. At its meeting on 18 November 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee applied the Scrutiny/Executive Protocol agreed at the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2021. The protocol makes provision for the appointment of up to three Independent Cooptees to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

In light of this, an external advertisement process was put in place and, following expressions of interest, interviews for candidates were held on 15 September 2021. Two candidates, Paul Leslie and Matthew Brooks, emerged from the interview process as candidates for the independent cooptee positions. Their CVs have

Last year, the appointment of an external Independent Co-optee to the Budget Working Commission (BWC) was piloted and proved a resounding success. This year, nominees were sought from a range of organisations and David Phillips (Institute for Fiscal Studies) and John O'Halloran (CIPFA) were appointed on a voluntary, pro bono basis.

- **Executive Accountability/Call-in:** At its meeting on 3 August 2021, the OSC considered a Call-in on the subject of the "Stratford Youth Zone: Permission (authority) to Tender for Services". Call-in's take place in accordance with the provisions of Rule 15 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. Following debate and a vote, it was agreed not to refer the matter back to Cabinet.

At its meeting on 23 September 2021, the OSC considered activeNewham. It scrutinized the work undertaken by officers and activeNewham since the Covid-19 pandemic began. It also looked at activeNewham's recovery plan, including actions taken to address the financial loss incurred, as a result of Covid-19 and plans going forward to support resident's physical and mental health.

Also at the meeting of 23 September 2021, the Mayor introduced a report that provided an update on progress with the development and delivery of the permanent Citizens' Assembly. In presenting the report, the Mayor highlighted that the ambition was for Newham to be a beacon of participatory democracy and said the Citizens' Assembly was the first in England to be set up. It was explained that recruitment to the Citizens' Assembly had been undertaken during the summer. A diligent process of sortition

(random selection) had been used to recruit 50 residents representative of the borough to join the Citizens' Assembly.

The Corporate Director for People, Policy and Performance outlined the progress on the delivery of the recommendations from the Civic Participation and Democracy Commission report. It was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee incorporate the implementation of Citizens' Assemblies recommendations into the work programme and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive an update during spring/summer 2022.

- **Scrutiny of Strategy:** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered Newham's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) in March 2021. The original LFRMS was produced in 2015, but it was never adopted. The LFRMS was updated and was ready to go out for consultation. The Committee's views on the LFRMS were welcomed and incorporated into the Strategy where relevant.
- **Overall Budget Scrutiny:** The Budget Scrutiny Commission was established at an OSC meeting held on 23 September 2021. Following a wide range of meetings with services as well as corporately, the final report for 2020/21 was considered at the OSC meeting on 15 February 2022. Cabinet considered this report and its recommendations at its meeting on 24 February 2022. The final report can be [read here](#). A brief overview of the work of the Budget Working is included separately in Section D below.
- **Holding meetings remotely/virtually:** Following enabling legislation passed by National Government during the initial Covid lockdown period, the Council agreed that public meetings would be held on the *Zoom* platform and that these would be broadcast on *YouTube*. The OSC held its first virtual meeting on 15 June 2021, with other Scrutiny Commissions following suit. A hybrid model has remained in operation since then, and as restrictions have eased and following the lapse of the legislation, meetings have again been held both in person as well as with remote access opportunity.
- **Scrutiny and the Coronavirus Pandemic:**
  - The OSC considered a final report of the Covid-19 task and finish scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 27 April 2021. Councillor Lee-Phakoe reflected on the enormous global impact of the coronavirus pandemic and explained that the Commission had been established to examine and formulate recommendations regarding COVID-19 matters and the related decisions taken by the Council and its partner organisations. The Commission had paid particular attention to: examining community impact and the actions taken to understand and meet the needs of the community; examining the transition to the recovery phase and the return to 'business as usual'.
  - In presenting the report, Councillor Lee-Phakoe outlined the range of issues the Commission had reviewed, including: the challenges faced by schools, the NHS track and trace arrangements; the Director of Public Health's outbreak Management Plan, and the Council's communications. It was highlighted that the wellbeing of Newham

residents had been the focus of the Commission, and it was the lived experience of residents that had remained the primary concern of the work undertaken.

## Section B

### Thematic Scrutiny Commissions

- As indicated above, Newham Council has established a statutory [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) (OSC) to oversee the scrutiny function at Newham.
- The OSC has established four thematic standing Scrutiny Commissions to discharge its functions, including those statutorily prescribed for Crime and Health. These Commissions each address a thematic policy and Council service area as follows:
  - a) Crime and Antisocial Behaviour;
  - b) Education, Children and Young People;
  - c) Regeneration, Housing and Environment; and
  - d) Health and Adult Social Care.

A brief summary of the work of each of these Commissions highlighting some of the achievements of each Commission is reviewed below.

The work of time-limited task and finish groups/Commissions is covered in Section C below.

### Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Scrutiny Commission

**Chair: Councillor Daniel Lee-Phakoe**

**Membership:**

**Councillors:**

- Councillor Jennifer Bailey (Deputy Chair)
- Councillor Salim Patel
- Councillor Riaz Mirza
- Councillor Ken Clark
- Councillor Belgica Guaña
- Councillor Susan Masters
- Councillor John Gray
- Councillor Mushtaq Mughal
- Councillor Joy Laguda

Commission highlights for 2020/21 include:

**Meeting on 5 May 2021:**

- **Scrutiny of Serious Violence and Murders in the Borough:** At its meeting on 5 May 2021, the Commission considered this urgently, taking evidence from Councillor James Beckles, Gary Connors, Tim Aldridge, Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Superintendent Waheed Khan and Chief Inspector Chris Nixon.

#### **Meeting on September 2021:**

- **Tracking Recommendations and Actions by the Scrutiny Commission:** At its meeting on 21 September 2021, all the Commission's recommendations and actions from May 2018 to the present were sent to the Executive and officers. They were also provided with the previous responses that been sent to the Commission up to May 2021. It was requested that the Executive and officers provide updates to the Commission to enable them to track the progress of the Commission's recommendations and actions.
- **Executive Accountability/Scrutiny of Council Services:** At the same meeting in September 2021, the Commission also considered Enforcement team levels in the Borough. At this meeting, the Commission was also informed of the current structure and resources within the Community Safety Service in relation to Noise abatement and provide context of the extent of demand, outputs and deliverables.

#### **Meeting on 30 November 2021:**

- **Executive Accountability/Scrutiny of Council Services:** At the Commission's meeting on 30 November 2021, the Commission considered a report on 'Environment - fly-tipping' and scrutinised work being done to reduce fly-tipping in the borough. It also considered a report reviewing policies to tackle street drinking in the borough.

#### **Meeting on 27 January 2022:**

- **In-depth scrutiny reviews: Review of engagement with sex workers in the borough:** At its meeting on 27 January, the Commission looked at this issue in depth, to determine:
  - Where in the borough services are focused to give appropriate support to sex workers and support women;
  - How services related to sex workers and prostitution in the borough are provided to ensure the most effective outcomes.
  - What specific support services are provided.
  - Who provides the services to this cohort. For example, are there any commissioned services that support the Council's internal services;
  - Additionally, who are other partners that the Council work closely with the funding for these services, included the length of any contracts if there are any commissioned services.
- **Partnership Scrutiny:** At its meeting on 27 January 2022, the Commission put questions to the Borough Commander on general criminality and Antisocial Behaviour in the Borough.

#### **Meeting on 10 February 2022:**

- **Executive Accountability/Statutory Crime Scrutiny:** At its meeting on 10 February 2022, the Commission looked at the action plan for the Youth Offending Team, considering progress made by its leadership, its partnership and workforce in relation to the recommendations made by HM Inspectorate of Probation in June 2019 and the service improvement plan that is in place to monitor this.

- **Partnership Scrutiny:** At its meeting on 10 February 2022, the Commission reviewed an update on Newham’s current crime data position and actions undertaken to support the priorities of the Newham Community Safety Partnership. This included an update for Commission members on activity of the Partnership in 2021/22.

**Meeting on 15 March 2022:**

Yet to be held at the time of writing this report.

**In-depth Reviews:**

**Recommendation tracking - Serious Youth Violence and its Effects on Young Women in the Borough**

The Commission conducted an in-depth review titled “Serious Youth Violence and its effects on Young Women in the Borough - female participation in gangs”. The review was shaped by three evidence sessions. The review examined the reasons and causes of female participation in gang culture, their experiences, as well as the role of prevention services to support those at risk of becoming involved in gangs. It also considered services provided to those trying to escape involvement.

Based on a wide range of evidence taken from a range of key stakeholders, the Commission will present a report and recommendations to the Mayor and the Cabinet in June 2021.

At the Commission’s meeting on 30 November 2021, the Commission received an update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Serious Youth Violence and its Effects on Young Women in the Borough Review Report.

## **Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission**

**Chair: Councillor Anthony McAlmont**

**Membership:**

Councillors:

Councillor Sasha DasGupta  
 Councillor Lester Hudson  
 Councillor Patrick Murphy  
 Councillor Quintin Peppiatt  
 Councillor Aisha Siddiqah  
 Councillor Delphine Gbeyoro Tohoura  
 Councillor Rachel Tripp  
 Councillor Harvinder Singh Virdee  
 Councillor John Whitworth

Co-Opted Members:

- Ms Ellen Kemp (Church of England Representative)

- Mr Paul Underwood (Roman Catholic Representative)

### **Commission highlights for 2020/21:**

The Commission considered many topics during the period under review, but it is worth emphasising that it has continued to maintain a focus on monitoring the Children's Service response to the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection in February 2019 and the improvement journey to Children's Services that has been undertaken. The summary below shows further details, but the Commission has carefully monitored datasets produced internally and externally, reports, also produced internally and externally, and rigorously questioned good practice all across the directorate to ensure improvement.

### **Meeting on 14 July 2021:**

- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement:** The Commission scrutinized work undertaken as a result of the Ofsted Monitoring Visit, which took place in May 2021, the results of which were published on 30 June 2021.
- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability:** At this meeting, the Commission considered a report on Disproportionality and Overrepresentation related to Educational Outcomes. In particular, it wanted to understand the context of disproportionality as it relates to the Newham. This includes updated data analysis on educational achievement (attainment and progression) and participation (attendance and exclusion) in education. The purpose of this was to aid discussion, with a view to deciding on the next lines of enquiry for the discovery research and the scope for this work.
- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability:** The Commission reviewed the organisational provision of Maintained Nursery Schools in order to:
  - Assess take up of maintained nursery school early education places and
  - Assess financial challenges and long-term sustainability of maintained nursery Schools.

### **Meeting on 22 September 2021:**

This meeting was held as an informal meeting due to being inquorate. Its discussion and decisions were formally agreed at the meeting on 2 December 2021.

- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability: Children's Service's Improvement –** The Commission considered this in order to:
  - Understand progress in the Children's Social Care department, especially progress against the findings of the Ofsted-focused Visit in May 2021, and to ensure that there is continued monitoring of the ongoing improvement, and to ensure requirements are fulfilled and sustained.
- Understand the context of social worker improvement and identify areas of improved practice, and areas where there is still required improvement.
- **Impact of Covid-19: COVID-19 and Educational Catch Up in Schools and Colleges -** The purpose of the Commission's consideration of this was to understand the provision available following central government funding announcements for catch-

ups, in light of the coronavirus pandemic, how this will be undertaken in maintained schools, and what the expected outcomes will be for children and young people in Newham.

- Additionally, the Commission wanted to understand how children and young people are likely to achieve and progress, what their trajectory is looking like in relation to benchmarking data, and how schools will use assessment to ensure they achieve what they are capable of based on their prior attainment and pre-pandemic progress and achievement.
- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability: Inclusion and Alternative Learning Provision** - The Commission considered Newham's current Alternative Provision Offer, looking at Alternative Provision Data as well as the approach to the Review of Alternative Provision and Specialist Support, the consultation programme and the emerging strategic intent and vision.

#### **Meeting on 2 December 2021:**

At this meeting, the minutes of the meeting held 14 July 2021 were discussed. The notes and recommendations of the informal meeting 22 September 2021 were also discussed.

- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability: Children's Service's Improvement** – The Commission received an update on the progress against Ofsted recommendations and the ongoing approach to social care improvement, including:
  - To understand progress in the Children's Social Care department, and to ensure that there is continued monitoring of the ongoing improvement, and to ensure Ofsted requirements are fulfilled and sustained.
  - To understand progress against three priority areas of Case Recording, Supervision and Planning.
- To understand and monitor progress against the Executive Key Performance Indicator set.
- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Performance in Newham** – The Commission considered an evaluation of the local area's progress in implementing the SEND Reforms outlined in the Children and Families Act 2014. It reviewed the overall effectiveness of agencies in Newham that identify, assess and respond to the needs of children and young people with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and Newham's wider SEND improvement programme. The Commission also considered a summary of key themes explored as part of the independent SEND Commission chaired by Professor Geoff Lindsay.
- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability: Brighter Futures Directorate – Direction of Travel and Performance** - The Commission considered an overview of the progress of Brighter Futures directorate, key activity, and corresponding impact in advance of a meeting with scrutiny members to discuss key lines of enquiry as they pertain to the service area. The Commission also considered the direction of travel and key deliverables for the next six months.

**Meeting on 23 February 2022:**

- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability:** Children's Service's Improvement – The Commission continued to look closely at this area, again using the criteria as outlined for above for the meeting on 2 December 2021.
- **Scrutiny of Service Improvement/Executive Accountability: Brighter Futures Directorate** – The Commission again reviewed the work of this Directorate, an overview of the progress of Brighter Futures, continuing its scrutiny of the directorate since its creation, key activity, and corresponding impact . The Commission also looked at additional background and detail in relation to Youth Empowerment Services, as well continued consideration of the direction of travel and key deliverables for the next six months.

**Meeting on 13 April 2022:**

Meeting yet to be held at the time of writing this annual report.

## **Regeneration, Housing and Environment Scrutiny Commission**

**Chair – Joshua Garfield**

**Membership:****Councillors:**

Councillor Hanif Abdulmuhit  
 Councillor Alan Griffiths  
 Councillor Zuber Gulamussen  
 Councillor Pushpa Dipaklal Makwana  
 Councillor Farah Nazeer  
 Councillor Lakmini Shah  
 Councillor Delphine Gbeyoro Tohouora  
 Councillor Harvinder Singh Virdee  
 Councillor Neil Wilson

**Overview:****Commission Highlights for 2021/22:**

The Commission reviewed many areas of interest to Members and residents, but some particularly impactful work undertaken by the Commission was in the year 2021/22 the response to the consultation on the Homelessness 5 Year Strategy. This was an opportunity for the Commission to follow up on work which had been undertaken previously on reviewing homelessness policy and action in the borough. The Commission was able to respond formally to the consultation of the 5 year strategy on 14 October 2021 and to provide comment and recommendations. These recommendations were formally accepted and included in the process of the development of the Homelessness 5 Year Strategy.



Another key area for the commission, and one that has significant public interest, was the Commission response to the Newham City Farm proposals. The Commission undertook an extraordinary meeting in July 2021 that reviewed the issues relating to the Newham City Farm, options pertaining to it for the future, and what Cabinet planned to do with the site. The Commission heard evidence and proposed a series of recommendations which can be seen in more detail below. This work assured the Commission that all options had been carefully considered, that the community would be listened to as part of future consultation on the Beckton parks masterplan, and that Cabinet considered the recommendations of scrutiny carefully.

#### **Meeting on 8 July 2021:**

- **Executive Accountability/Service Improvement: Future of Newham City Farm** – The Commission considered an overview of the current strategic and operational challenges facing Newham City Farm. The Farm was at the time of scrutiny closed to the public. In order to re-open, extensive investment in site infrastructure was required to bring it up to a standard in keeping with comparable modern facilities. The site was also faced with ongoing revenue pressures relating to a historic undelivered saving and increases to running costs. The Commission considered future options for the facility.
- The following recommendation was agreed and submitted to the Executive: That the Commission endorse the option outlined in point 6.4 of the report that the Council look to close the facility and re-purpose the site with a view to integrate into a wider Beckton Parks Masterplan, with the understanding that the Executive consider the following:
  - That the Executive provide an explanation of how the site is proposed to integrate into the Beckton Parks Masterplan and understand how this will affect the Plan's Capital expenditure and future projected revenue.
  - That the Executive guarantee that an animal offer of some kind is provided as part of consideration for the future of the site.
  - That the Executives develop an in-depth communication plan with stakeholders to explain what the options for the future of the Newham City Farm and keep stakeholders informed about the future of the site.

#### **Meeting on 14 October 2021:**

- **Scrutiny of Council Strategy/Executive Accountability:** In December 2019 the Council agreed its first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 10 years. The Council's ambition is to build on this success with a new five year strategy. In July 2021, Cabinet approved a proposal to consult stakeholders and residents on a new draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This replaces the two-year strategy agreed by Cabinet in December 2019. The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy considered by the Commission set out the context, approach, and outcomes the Council aims to achieve by the end of the plan's five-year life. The Action Plan provides detail on the actions that the Council will take from January 2022 to March 2023. The Action Plan will be renewed annually, with a review of the previous year's Action Plan.
- **Executive Accountability/Service Improvement: Parking Enforcement Overview** – The Commission reviewed Parking Enforcement measures and the

resources allocated to them in the borough. It additionally sought to understand how changes to the service and resourcing impacted on how the service could effectively undertake its role, with an aim to identify the restrictions on the service and areas to develop.

- **Executive Accountability/Service Improvement: Populo Living Performance and Delivery** – The Commission reviewed the performance of Newham’s housing delivery programme through Populo Living. It also questioned officers and executives of Populo Living in order to understand how Populo is working to contribute to the delivery of the target of the 1,000 additional homes in the borough.

**Meeting on 8 December 2021:**

- This meeting was postponed.

## Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Chair - Councillor Ayesha Chowdhury

**Members:**

Councillors:

- Councillor Muhammad Abdul Ali
- Councillor Daniel Blaney
- Councillor Moniba Khan
- Councillor Susan Masters
- Councillor Tahmina Rahman
- Councillor Suga Thekkeppurayil
- Councillor Neil Wilson

Highlights for 2021/22 include:

**Meeting on 19 May 2021:**

- **Update on non-Covid-19-related elective care backlogs:** The Commission considered a report informing the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on the non-Covid-19 related backlogs at Newham Hospital and Barts Health NHS Trust. It was agreed that the Commission would receive:
  - Details related to funding and investment for Barts Health NHS Trust from bids to NHS England for diagnostic equipment to increased capacity.
  - Up-to-date data specific to Newham on appointment and elective surgery
  - Headline figures on investment tackling equity of access.
- **Scrutiny of Services:** The Commission considered a report and associated documents relating to ‘Dentistry in the Borough’. It was agreed that the Commission would receive a strategy to develop dental services in the borough from the NEL CCG.
- **Scrutiny of Services:** The Commission considered a report and associated documents relating to the ‘Transfer of Ownership of GPs in the borough’.

### Meeting on 16 September 2021:

- **COVID-19 and winter planning:** The Commission received regular updates on the latest key points and developments related to Covid-19, vaccination programme and winter planning. At this meeting, it looked more closely at the current prevalence of COVID-19 in Newham, the latest performance and next phases of the COVID-19 vaccination programme and the latest planning underway for winter 2021/22.
- **In-depth Reviews: The Marmot review of Health Inequalities** - The Commission considered the background to the approach of the Marmot review of Health Inequalities, including both the key concepts that underlie the analysis of health inequalities in England and the recommendations which emerge from the evidence base. It also reviewed how Newham, both through the 50 Steps to a Healthier Borough strategy and more widely, through Towards a Better Newham has an ambitious agenda for tackling health inequalities.
- **Scrutiny of Partners:** The Health and Care Partnership in Newham - The Commission was asked to note the recent and on-going development of the 5-year health and care priorities and strategy for Newham. It was also asked to note the detailed co-production that has recently begun in the Borough to assess needs, design service improvements and to integrate care services for each priority identified. It was indicated that, once completed, the Commission would be consulted on the appropriate mechanisms for further engagement with residents of the borough on the draft strategy.
- **Scrutiny of Services: Primary Care Networks & Access to GP Services and the move to digitalization** – The commission considered the national direction of travel for PCNs in relation to Primary Care Networks, Access to GP Services, and the move to digitalisation, and shares the progress that has been made in Newham, as well as the plans for the next steps.

### Meeting on 11 November 2021:

- **In-depth Reviews: The Marmot review of Health Inequalities** – Having begun its review on 16 September 2021, the Commission considered evidence on Public Health from the City of Coventry and the GLA Health Team.
- **COVID-19 and winter planning:** Part of its programme of regular updates, the Commission considered and update on the latest key points related to winter Covid-19 and the Covid-19 vaccination programme.
- **Scrutiny of Services:** The Commission considered a report and associated documents relating to the 'Transfer of Ownership of GPs in the borough'.

### Meeting on 20 January 2022:

- **In-depth Reviews: The Marmot Review of Health Inequalities** – The Commission took evidence from Jessica Allen, Deputy Director - Institute of Health Equity. It also received an update on the '50 Steps Strategy'.

- **COVID-19 Update:** Continuing the series of regular on the latest key points related to Covid-19 and the Covid-19 vaccination programme.
- **Scrutiny of Services: Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment** - In autumn 2020 the London Borough of Newham the partnership led a mental wellbeing impact assessment to take a systematic and evidence-based approach to understanding further the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental wellbeing of residents of Newham. The aim was to build on work to date and to co-produce a piece of work to help prioritise actions and activities to move forwards. Through a series of workshops, the process brought together people from the public and voluntary sector services alongside those working with or having experience of mental health services.

The Commission also reviewed the HeadStart Newham funding by The National Lottery Community Fund and considered opportunities, risks and sustainability beyond July 2022, as outlined as priorities for the next six months in the 'Brighter Futures Directorate – Direction of Travel and Performance' report dated 2 February 2021.

- **Executive Response to recommendations:** The Commission considered the Executives response to the recommendations made in its Mental Health Services Review. As part of the in-depth review, the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee held three evidence sessions which focused on:
  - An overview of mental health service provision in the borough
  - Children and Young People – Child and Adolescent Mental health Services (CAMHS)
  - Over-65s mental health provision.

The Executive provided a substantive response, which can be read [here](#).

## Section C

### Task and Finish Commissions

#### Budget Working Commission:

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established the BWC at its meeting on 23 September 2021.
2. Last year's BWC produced a report with recommendations considered by the Executive at its Cabinet meeting on 18 February 2021. The report can be found [here](#). Besides being a good general reference point for this year's BWC, it also summarised the themes and meetings that were held last year and in effect served as a process-template for this year.
3. Based on precedent established last year, it was agreed to co-opt independent external expertise to the BWC and, having approached appropriate individuals, David Phillips (Institute for Fiscal Studies) and John O'Halloran (CIPFA) were appointed to serve on the BWP as non-voting co-optees.
4. Members of the Budget Working Commission:
  - Councillors:**
    - Anthony McAlmont (Chair)
    - Daniel Lee-Phakoe
    - Ayesha Chowdhury
    - Joshua Garfield
    - Quintin Peppiatt
    - Lakmini Shah
    - Lester Hudson
    - Neil Wilson
    - Belgica Guana
    - Farah Nazeer
    - Hanif Abdulmuhit
    - Harvinder Singh Virdee
  - Co-optees:**
    - David Phillips (Institute for Fiscal Studies - IFS)
    - John O'Halloran (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy - CIPFA)
5. The general approach taken by the Budget Working Commission included exploring with the Executive the following broad key lines of enquiry:
  - a. Financial breakdowns of departmental budgets
  - b. Key assumptions underlying departmental budgets
  - c. Areas earmarked for savings or efficiencies and the associated rationale for these
  - d. Any areas of slippage
  - e. Key areas of risk and mitigating actions
  - f. Areas of potential growth

- g. Any present and future strategic considerations.
  - h. How adoption of the Corporate Plan is resulting in tangible cultural change throughout departments as well as how it is translating into real improvement and saving for the Council.
6. There are always two phases to the work of the Budget Working Commission. **Phase 1 benchmarks its future work against scrutiny of the existing budget**, and Cabinet papers which form the basis of this initial, preparatory budget scrutiny work [can be found here](#).
7. **Phase 1** benchmarks against the in-year budget Departmental responses to KLOEs common to all meetings i.e. **prior** to the provisional budget being made known. The KLOE's include:
- a) key assumptions underlying departmental budget,
  - b) areas earmarked for savings or efficiencies and the associated rationale for these,
  - c) any areas of slippage,
  - d) key areas of risk, mitigating actions,
  - e) areas of potential growth and any present and future strategic considerations.
  - f) Changes in corporate culture and how adoption of the Corporate Plan is resulting in tangible cultural change throughout your departments as well as how it is translating into real improvement and saving for the Council.
  - g) Specific areas as described in the action plan/meetings below and as expressed in individual invitations.
9. **Phase 2** continues on the basis of phase 1 with similar KLOEs, **after** the provisional budget is made known.
10. The purpose of the BWC is two-fold: Firstly, to scrutinise the Draft and Provisional Budget 2022/23 tabled at Cabinet on 7 December 2021. This report can be found [here](#). And secondly, the BWC scrutinises the final budget, this year titled "*Newham Budget 2022/23: Supporting our people through uncertain times*" – also referred to hereinafter simply as the *Cabinet Budget Report* and tabled on the Cabinet agenda of 8 February 2022. This report can be found [here](#). This Scrutiny work forms the basis of a report containing recommendations for consideration by the Mayor and Cabinet, to which they are required to respond.
11. Member questioning and the answers received from the Executive in relation to the above broad key lines of enquiry during both phases are outlined in the final report which can be read [here](#). The nine recommendations can also be found in the report, summarised for ease of reference in the Executive Summary.
12. General Key Lines of Enquiry were shared with the Executive in the invitations sent to them in advance of the meetings. This enabled an element of consistency to be introduced - a consistent thread throughout the work of the BWC. In addition, in some instances where time permitted, more detailed Key Lines of Enquiry were produced by

the BWC and were sent to the Executive. Given the tight timescales, this was sometimes difficult for both the BWC and the Executive; this is the nature of the work programme of the BWC and is recognised in the Scrutiny/Executive Protocol.

8. The Budget Working Party held numerous formal evidence gathering meetings. Some of these were service specific or thematic, and at least two considered the draft and provisional budget as a whole. Members of the Executive were invited as relevant, and the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Finance were invited to the first and last formal sessions of the BWC.
9. The Budget Working Commission Chair also held informal meetings with officers and Cabinet Members as needed based on information requirements as expressed at formal BWC meetings.
10. After consideration of the evidence provided in these sessions, the BWC developed several recommendations, all for consideration by Cabinet as it finalised its budget proposals to be presented to Council.
11. The BWC final report was considered at the OSC meeting on 15 February 2021. Cabinet considered this report and its recommendations at its meeting on 24 February 2021. The BWC final report can be read [here](#).

## **Removal of Combustible Cladding from Residential Buildings Task and Finish Commission**

**Chair – Joshua Garfield**

### **Members:**

Councillors:

Councillor Joshua Garfield  
 Councillor Alan Griffiths  
 Councillor Belgica Guaña  
 Councillor Susan Masters  
 Councillor Rachel Tripp  
 Councillor Winston Vaughan  
 Councillor Harvinder Singh Virdee  
 Councillor John Whitworth

### **Brief Overview:**

1. Under the current Council Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can establish task and finish groups as it deems necessary to look in-depth at specific areas based on agreed terms of reference and to make recommendations to the Executive.
2. At the Full Council meeting of 17 March 2021, a motion was submitted in accordance with Rule 12 of Part 4.1 of the Constitution. It was titled “End our Cladding Scandal - Motion to Newham Council 17 March 2021.”

3. The Council unanimously endorsed the motion, which is appended to the terms of reference of the Commission and can be read [here](#).
4. Amongst other detailed proposals dealt with more fully below, the motion proposed the establishment of a scrutiny task and finish group to look at this issue and in light of this, the Commission was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 April 2021.
5. The Commission has produced an interim progress report which can be read [here](#). The interim report indicates that the Commission will be producing an Annual Report, and as such it is only covered briefly in this overarching Scrutiny Annual Report.
6. Informal Briefing sessions were held for the Commission in July and November 2021. Members were provided a briefing on the upcoming Building Safety Bill and the possible implications for Newham Council and to understand where the key powers and actors are and who is responsible for key areas of building safety.
7. Its First Session was held on 19 May 2021. The first session of the Task and Finish Commission aimed to receive resident input and to gain an understanding of the local experience of the issue of combustible cladding and the wider building safety crisis.
8. In doing this, the commission received input from local campaign groups and residents to understand their main objectives, key issues facing Newham residents, and explore ways to resolve them. The Commission received input from Mr Matthew Waterfall and Ms Amy Owen-Dixon of the Wood Grange Estate Residents' Association, as well as from Mr Sam Williams of the End Our Cladding Scandal Campaign.
9. The Commission also sought to query the possibility of developers submitting new planning applications of their suitability to build again in Newham, if any previous construction project of theirs is subject to unresolved cladding issues and understand whether the Council can place any restrictions on new developments as a result.
10. The Commission's second Session was held on 15 September 2021. In this session the Task and Finish Commission aimed to gain an understanding of how the local authority and external bodies were working to ensure the safety of private sector developments and monitor compliance of cladding removal and replacement. As a goal, the Commission was looking to have understood work undertaken by the Council and its partners and make recommendations of ways to improve communication, outreach and interconnectivity between organisations to improve outcomes.
11. At its meeting on 1 December 2022, the Cladding Commission considered the following items, all of which will be reported on fully in the Commission's annual report:
  - Housing Associations Enforcement - To understand the roles and responsibilities of those involved in Housing Association Enforcement, what this means for residents, and how the Council is working with the Ministry of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (MLUHC) to address these issues in the long term.
  - Newham Council's stock investment and management arrangements - To outline the current status of Newham Council's stock and cladding arrangements, what work has been undertaken, and what future work will be done to ensure the safety of Newham Council stock.



- The Commission also reviewed and approved the draft interim report for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12. A meeting has been scheduled for 9 March 2022.

## External (Cross-Borough) Scrutiny Committees

### The Inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Brief Overview:

1. The Inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (INEL JHOSC) is a joint scrutiny committee comprising elected representatives from the London Boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and the City of London Corporation. Councillor Neil Zammett - London Borough of Redbridge has observer status.
2. The Committee's remit is to consider London wide and local NHS service developments and changes that impact on the five local authority areas.
3. Newham appointed three Councillors:
  - Anthony McAlmont: Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
  - Ayesha Chowdhury: Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Commission
  - Susan Masters, member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

As at April 2021, the rest of the Committee consisted of:

- Councillor Ben Hayhurst - London Borough of Hackney (Chair)\*
- Councillor Gabriela Salva-Macallan - London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Kam Adams - London Borough of Hackney
- Councillor Peter Snell - London Borough of Hackney
- Councillor Ayesha Chowdhury - London Borough of Newham
- Councillor Susan Masters - London Borough of Newham
- Councillor Anthony McAlmont - London Borough of Newham
- Councillor Farouque Ahmed- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Councillor Shah Ameen - London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Councillor Umar Ali - London Borough of Waltham Forest
- Councillor Nick Halebi - London Borough of Waltham Forest
- Councillor Richard Sweden - London Borough of Waltham Forest

Observer:

- Councillor Neil Zammett - London Borough of Redbridge

\*Chair from 10 February 2021

\*\* Councillor Winston Vaughan - London Borough of Newham; Chair to 10 February 2021

4. By convention, support for the Joint Committee rotates around member authorities on a biennial basis. For 2019 and 2020, the London Borough of Newham was the local authority providing support for the Joint Committee and Councillor Winston Vaughan was elected Chair. The London Borough of Hackney was nominated as the next borough to provide for the Joint Committee in September 2021. Councillor Ben Hayhurst, London Borough of Hackney was elected Chair of the Joint Committee on 10 February 2021 and Councillor Gabriela Salva-Macallan - London Borough of Tower Hamlets was elected Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee on 10 February 2021.
5. The Committee met in April 2019, September 2019, November 2019, January 2020, February 2020, June 2020, September 2020, November 2020 and February 2021, June 2021, September 2021, December 2021 and March 2022.

By way of summary, the key areas considered by the INEL include:

- **Challenges of building back elective care Post-Pandemic and response to the Pandemic**

The Joint Committee looked to review the plans in terms of the NHS responding to the challenges of the Pandemic. They also looked in detail at the plans of the NHS Trusts and the NEL CCG of re-establish services in the new conditions created by the Pandemic. They also looked at the NHS's plans to address the backlog in elective surgery and appointments that was built-up due to need of the NHS to concentrate most of its resources to ensure that the NHS was not overwhelmed by the Pandemic.
- **Implementation of North East London Integrated Care System**

The Joint Committee looked at the plans of the NEL CCG to implement the proposals contained in the Health & Care Bill and negotiating all the changes that occurs as the Bill goes through legislative process. This involved ensured that local authorities and elected Members could play a full role reviewing and scrutiny the healthcare services in their boroughs.