Recovery Board Minutes

21 July 2026, 15.00 – 16.30

Attendees:
Commissioners: Ged Curran, Lead Commissioner (chair); Debbie Warren, Commissioner for Finance; Abi Brown, Political Commissioner

Members: Mayor Jason Perry, Executive Mayor; Cllr Hale, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing; Cllr Cummings, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance; Councillor Stuart King, Leader of the Opposition

Officers: Elaine Jackson, Acting Chief Executive; Conrad Hall, Corporate Director, Resources (S151); Venetia Reid-Baptiste, Corporate Director, Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery (SCRER); Stuart Collins, Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education (DCS); Annette McPartland, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Health; Stephen Gaskell, Assistant Chief Executive; Mona Sehgal, Local Government Association; Ella Hullett, Strategic Support Officer

Chief of Staff Team: Lindsey Lewis, Chief of Staff to the Commissioners

Apologies: Kevin Kewin, Jackie Belton

Minutes, actions and updates

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate account of the **26 June 2026** meeting.

Financial Strategy

Key Discussion Points

- The Financial Strategy was presented as a long-term strategic framework rather than a budget, providing indicative savings targets and a direction of travel for achieving financial sustainability.
- The Council's ambition is to reduce service costs towards median and ultimately lower-quartile benchmark levels while maintaining or improving outcomes for residents.
- Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Temporary Accommodation and SEND/EHCP demand were identified as key areas requiring further improvement and cost reduction activity.
- Members discussed the importance of focusing on reducing unit costs and tackling demand pressures through prevention and service redesign rather than relying solely on service reductions.
- The transformation programme has been refocused on the areas most likely to deliver financial benefits in the short to medium term, with some activity deferred to a later phase.
- Concerns were noted regarding the ongoing risks associated with the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), future demand pressures and the Council's longer-term debt position.
- The importance of robust implementation planning, organisational capacity and strong financial accountability arrangements was emphasised throughout discussions.
- Members welcomed the increased transparency around budget options and the intention to engage stakeholders earlier in the budget-setting process.

Decisions / Conclusions

- The Financial Strategy was broadly endorsed as a clear statement of intent and a realistic framework for achieving financial sustainability.
- Corporate Directors will be responsible for developing detailed delivery plans to demonstrate how savings targets can be achieved and the implications of proposed changes.
- Further detailed implementation planning will be developed, with a focus on deliverability, monitoring arrangements and organisational capacity.

Improvement Programme Workflow and Approach

Key Discussion Points

- A revised approach to improvement governance was presented, placing directorates and Corporate Directors at the centre of improvement delivery rather than treating transformation as a separate activity.
- The need for clear accountability, consistent reporting and effective governance arrangements across the organisation was emphasised.
- Significant discussion focused on the role of the Corporate Programme Management Office (CPMO), including its responsibilities for oversight, assurance, coordination and resource management.
- Concerns were raised regarding:
    - Potential duplication across governance forums.
    - The number of boards and oversight arrangements already in place.
    - The risk of excessive focus on governance structures rather than delivery outcomes.
    - Whether the proposed paper sufficiently reflected existing governance arrangements and reporting lines
- Members stressed the importance of ensuring that resource requirements across HR, Legal, Procurement and programme management functions are properly planned and coordinated.
- Officers highlighted the need for clearer expectations around accountability, reporting and decision-making to support delivery and avoid duplication.
- The Local Government Association offered support and suggested learning from approaches adopted by other authorities, including Tower Hamlets.

Decisions / Conclusions

- There was broad agreement that improvement delivery should remain owned by directorates, with the CPMO operating primarily as an assurance, coordination and reporting function rather than a decision-making body.
- The proposed governance arrangements and CPMO role require further refinement and discussion to ensure clarity of purpose, accountability and reporting lines.
- Future work will focus on strengthening governance and delivery arrangements while maintaining a strong emphasis on implementation and outcomes.

AOB

No AOB was raised.

Meeting End