

Clear Up Project

1. Scope

- 1.1 The Clear Up project is established to conduct a review of any unconsidered allegations of improper Council decision making or impropriety in the discharge of Council functions. The project will focus on allegations which relate to any decisions or activity which took place between October 2010 and June 2016 (the period from the election of the first directly elected mayor to the re-launch of the Whistleblowing policy).
- 1.2 A key aim of the project is to encourage people to identify impropriety covering the above time period that has not been considered to date. An independent Clear Up Team will investigate these allegations.
- 1.3 The team's work will be led by a Programme Manager and overseen by a Clear Up Board which will be tasked with appropriately dealing with any substantiated allegations. This may include recommending disciplinary action, referring issues to the Police and ensuring that the learning from this project informs future Council practice.
- 1.4 Anybody can raise an allegation to the independent Clear Up Team as long as it meets the following criteria:
 - The allegation refers to a decision or activity that occurred between October 2010 and June 2016.
 - The allegation is notified directly to the Clear Up Team between Thursday 8th September 2016 and Thursday 8 December 2016 via the confidential email inbox clearupteam@towerhamlets.gov.uk;

or posted to Clear Up Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent London E14 2BG (please mark as private and confidential)

or via the Secretary of State's Commissioners, a Member of Parliament or a Councillor,

and includes details of the alleged impropriety and any evidence which supports the complainant's claim. The complainant should also provide their contact details to allow a member of the Clear Up Team to discuss further the allegation.
- 1.5 Allegations will not be investigated if they have already been satisfactorily considered or investigated through another process. This would include, but is not limited to:
 - the Council's complaints process;
 - the Council's Whistleblowing procedures;

- the Council's Code of Conduct for Conduct for Members;
- the Council's staff disciplinary procedures;
- a Council management investigation or review;
- an Audit Review (internal or external);
- a Judicial Review;
- the Best Value Inspection of Tower Hamlets Council.

1.6 The Clear Up Team will assess whether any allegation has been previously considered prior to undertaking any investigatory work.

1.7 In investigating allegations, the Clear Up Team will:

- Seek to protect the anonymity of complainants in investigating the allegation wherever possible;
- Notify the complainant and provide an outline timetable for investigating the allegation;
- Seek to complete all investigations by 31 March 2017.

Given the potentially complex nature of some allegations, and the time lapsed from the date they may have occurred, it is not possible to provide a generic timetable for investigation. However, the Clear Up Team will provide individual guidance on this in each case.

1.8 For each allegation, the Clear Up Team will seek to provide details on the resolution of the investigation to the complainant.

1.9 Complaints concerning matters arising since June 2016 can be made through the Council's existing procedures such as the Whistleblowing procedure or the corporate complaints procedure details of which are on the Council's website.

2. Governance

2.1 Clear Up Board - The Board membership will comprise:

- 3 x Tower Hamlets Statutory Officers (Chief Executive (Chair), Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer)
- 1 x Secretary of State's Commissioner

- 2.2 The Board, meeting regularly, will oversee the appointment of the Clear Up Team and management of the team once they are in place.
- 2.3 The Clear Up Team will comprise of an external and independent Programme Manager who will draw upon external and independent investigating officers as required.
- 2.4 At the first meeting of the Board following the close of the nomination period, the Clear Up Programme Manager will inform the Board of the number and nature of the allegations and provide indicative timescales for completing the investigations. In any instances where it is not entirely clear whether an allegation has previously been considered or investigated, the Clear Up Team will present the summary details of any allegation to the Board which will decide on the merits of investigating any elements of the allegation that have not been identified or sufficiently considered previously.
- 2.5 At the second meeting following the close of the nomination period the Clear Up Programme Manager will provide proposed timescales for the completion of investigations and reporting the findings. It is anticipated that the work of the Clear Up Team will be completed by the end of March 2017 or earlier subject to volume and complexity.
- 2.6 The Clear Up Programme Manager should escalate any issues, such as of access to information or employees in the Council, to the Clear Up Board which will take action to ensure that any blockages are resolved quickly and efficiently.
- 2.7 The Programme Manager will produce a report on each of the investigations detailing:
 1. Whether the allegation is upheld or rejected;
 2. Where an allegation is upheld, a view on whether the impropriety has since been remedied. For example, by changes to Council practices and internal controls;
 3. Recommendations for further action, including in relation to individuals involved.
- 2.8 The Clear Up Board will consider each investigation report and recommend action, if any, to the appropriate body or person.

3. Project close

- 3.1 The Board will produce a final report on the work of the Clear Up Project including details of the number and nature of the allegations made; the number of allegations that were substantiated and any action taken as a result of the investigations. The report will also summarise any lessons learnt from the project and how these will be fed into policy and practice in the future. The report will be submitted to a public meeting of the Council and published on the Council's website.