# Minutes of the Improvement Board
# Monday 1 June 2026 at 15:30-17:00 at Tower Hamlets Town Hall

**Attendees:**

Kim Bromley-Derry, Lead Ministerial Envoy (Chair)
Shokat Lal, Assistant Ministerial Envoy
Pam Parkes, Assistant Ministerial Envoy
Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor
Sam Harney, Senior Policy Advisor to the Mayor
Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive
Steven Reddy, Corporate Director Children's Services
David Joyce, Corporate Director Housing & Regeneration
Georgia Chimbani, Corporate Director Health & Social Care
Gillian Marston, Interim Corporate Director Communities
Richard Ennis, Interim Corporate Director Resources
Jon Lloyd, Strategic Director Improvement & Transformation
Ellen Clark, Director HR & OD
Shupriya Iqbal, Director Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Kirsty Roberts, Head of Strategy Partnerships and Improvement
Mona Sehgal, Principal Adviser for the Local Government Association (LGA)
Sophie Whitehead, Chief of Staff to Ministerial Envoys
Laila Ward, Deputy Chief of Staff to Ministerial Envoys
Chrissie Farrugia National Intervention Specialist, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (Observer)
Felicity Monfries-Ellett (Secretariat)

**1. Introductions, Welcome and Apologies**

1.1. The Chair welcomed attendees.

1.2. No apologies were received.

1.3. The Chair set out the expectations of members. He highlighted that the Improvement Board would focus on key intervention priorities with a focus on evidence and impact.

1.4. The Board considered and agreed the Terms of Reference, subject to a correction to a senior officer role description.

1.5. The Chair confirmed that the Envoys would be undertaking wider organisational and staff engagement, using existing engagement routes where appropriate.

## 2. ‘*What Good Looks Like’*

2.1. Shokat Lal (SL) provided an overview of the draft “What Good Looks Like” framework, which provides a shared understanding of the Envoys’ expectations and would evidence progress towards exiting intervention. He highlighted this was necessarily judgement based and should not be treated as a tick-box exercise. Further work will be required in partnership with the Council to develop the detail and actions sitting behind the framework, including milestones, metrics, and evidence.

2.2. Pam Parkes (PP) emphasised that the Council is leading their own improvement, it is responsible for proposing appropriate milestones, measures and proxies, with Envoys undertaking a check and challenge role.

2.3. The Board endorsed the steps towards agreeing common objectives and the importance of the framework not being treated as a tick-box exercise. The Board discussed the importance of distinguishing between ‘*What Good Look Like,’* Best Value compliance, and the threshold for exiting intervention.

2.4. The Board discussed prioritising critical measures and milestones essential for exiting intervention and ensuring Best Value compliance.

2.5. Stephen Halsey (SH) endorsed the iterative approach and the consideration of appropriate measures. He noted that some of the measures may be outside of the Councils’ control, for example some would rely on individual Members. The Chair responded the Envoys would also be considering whether the Council had taken all reasonable steps to achieve the measures in the framework.

2.6. The Board noted the next steps, including fortnightly SRO meetings, internal status reports, and a workshop with SROs and Envoys on 29 June 2026.

## 3. Reflections from the Mayor and Chief Executive

3.1. The Board received reflections from the Mayor and Chief Executive on recent progress and future priorities.

3.2. The Mayor emphasised that he would like to see absolute clarity on key milestones, actions, timelines and expectations of the Council over the coming months, however, welcomed the Council working in partnership to define these.

3.3. The Mayor invited Envoys to provide regular updates to the Mayor’s Advisory Board.

3.4. The Envoys committed to providing clarity, maintaining open communication and operating on a no-surprises basis.

3.5. PP reiterated that the action plan needed to be developed in partnership between the Council and Envoys with the Council responsible for developing the metrics and action plans with Envoys providing challenge.

3.6. SL emphasised the importance of ensuring that improvements were embedded and sustained.

3.7. The Chief Executive provided an update on recent progress, including:

- delivery of the recent election process;

- work to mobilise the deep dives;
- development of the assurance framework;
- people survey action planning;
- progress on the Member Pledge and political behaviour;
- temporary accommodation improvement activity; and
- senior leadership recruitment.

3.8. The Envoys recommended further work was required to ensure the assurance framework was understood by all staff.

**4. Governance, Political Culture and Decision Making**

4.1. Shupriya Iqbal (SI) provided an update on the Governance, Political Culture and Decision Making workstream. SI highlighted progress on the Member Pledge, new member induction programme, and the development of a member protocol.

4.2. SI emphasised that induction programmes were well attended and noted plans to refresh the mentoring programme with the LGA for both new and returning Members. A report would also be taken to Full Council in July on the Member Pledge.

4.3. The Chair noted that, as the regular rhythm of civic meetings resumes, the Envoys and the Council would be able to observe the impact of the introduced measures on Member behaviour.

4.4. PP reflected on the increased number of female members raised whether training was available specifically for female members.

4.5. The Chair explained he met with the new Greens and Labour group leaders, clarifying the Envoys' expectations that all groups work with the Council and the Envoys to support improvement.

**5. Culture and Workforce**

5.1. Ellen Clark (EC) updated on the Culture and Workforce workstream. EC noted:

- the completion of the latest People Survey, with the next scheduled for November 2026;
- the development of a corporate action plan, supported by directorate-level plans;
- expansion of the Your Voice Forum, with an ambition to increase membership by 50%;
- progress on the Deep Dive work;
- development of a senior leadership recruitment plan;
- continued development of the People Strategy; and
- ongoing HR transformation work.

5.2. PP noted that she recognised the significant pace of this work. The Board noted the importance of ensuring that sufficient capacity and resources were in place to support delivery.

## 6. Deep Dives

6.1. The Chair updated the Board on the Deep Dives work including timelines and next steps.

6.2. The Chair noted that the work could add value to the Council beyond the intervention process, including identifying good practice and supporting wider learning.

## 7. Forward Look

7.1. The Board considered the forward look for future meetings.

7.2. PP noted the importance of ensuring that papers were available in advance so that attendees could contribute actively to discussions and noted some future agenda items would be fixed, while others could be realigned if they no longer reflected the Council's priorities or the Board's requirements.

7.3. The Board discussed the timing of the Member Pledge review and suggested that October or November 2026 may be more appropriate than September 2026 to review the impact.

## 8. AOB and Date of Next Meeting

8.1. The Chair updated the Board that the Secretary of State's intention remains to appoint an Assistant Envoy with financial expertise and that once the appointment was confirmed there would be further discussion on how the role would interface with existing workstreams.

8.2. The Chair noted that the next meeting would take place on **2 July 2026**.

8.3. No further business was raised.