

# REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

<p><b>THE IMPACT OF THE MAYORAL MODEL IN HACKNEY</b></p> <p>Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission, 14 October 2009.</p>	<p><b>Classification</b></p> <p><b>Public</b></p>	<p><b>Enclosures</b></p> <p><i>Appendix 1: results of the Commission's Member Survey</i></p>
	<p><b>Ward(s) affected</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p>	

## 1. CHAIR'S FOREWORD

- 1.1. It is now more than six years since Hackney's Mayor was first elected. The post was established following the Local Government reforms suggested by the 1998 White Paper *"Modern Local Government: In touch with the People"*. The White Paper's proposals for new models of leadership coincided with a period of instability and poor performance associated with the period of no overall control of the council in the late 1990s. The all-party Democracy Convention, set up in 1998, considered a number of radical proposals and recommended that the option of a directly elected Mayor be pursued. Following legislation in 2000, and a referendum in May 2001 the first and so far only occupant of the post of directly elected Mayor of Hackney, Jules Pipe, was elected in October 2002.
- 1.2. It has been the aim of our review to look at the impact that the adoption of a directly elected Mayor model has had on Hackney. In undertaking the review we have sought the views of those involved in promoting and analysing the role of the elected Mayor, both nationally and locally. It has not been part of our review to examine the impact and performance of Mayor Pipe as an individual; he is separately subject to scrutiny by the public, the council and ultimately accountable to the electors of Hackney through the ballot box. We have looked at the impact of the model that has been adopted both in terms of its effect on the council's performance and culture and the implications it has had for officers and Members.
- 1.3. Overall, we conclude that the operation of the system in Hackney has had a generally positive impact in terms of the problems the council had been facing at the turn of the century. The Mayoral model has given stability, clarity and accountability to decision making. While we do not conclude that the improvement in the performance of the Council since 2002 is only attributable the adoption of the mayoral

model, we believe it has had a significant impact. We make no recommendation to change this model.

- 1.4. However, we have concluded that the role of other Members of the Council, neighbourhood working by Councillors and the “civic ambassador” role, performed in Hackney by the Speaker, have not always developed in ways to be as effective as might have been envisaged in 2002. We think that those who look back to the “halcyon days” of the Council committee system are misguided, but do agree that in some respects the role of a “backbench” or “frontline” Councillor needs better support if every one is to fulfill their role under the new system.
- 1.5. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor Project is currently exploring interesting work in this area. It aims to give the best possible support for Councillors to communicate effectively with their residents and to be local leaders, and scrutinise the Council and other local public services. The Commission wishes to support and encourage this work
- 1.6. We also conclude that the Neighbourhood forum structure does not work and a better model should be developed. We have noted and welcomed initiatives being undertaken, we urge that appropriate priority and resources be given to these initiatives and have made some recommendations that we believe may assist. We also ask that attention be given to how we might better engage at ward level, and build on recommendations in our “Team Hackney” report.
- 1.7. We considered evidence about the difficulty that the new model causes the “civic ambassador role” undertaken in Hackney by the Council’s Chair, our Speaker. We note that all the London Mayoral authorities have struggled with this but can at present see no alternative arrangement that resolves all the questions. We believe that the current arrangement works at least as well as other arrangements and make no recommendation for change at this stage.
- 1.8. I believe that this report will help all those that seek an understanding of the impact of the 2002 constitutional changes on Hackney. What began solely as an examination of the role of the Mayor, has perhaps inevitably, become more focused on the resulting impact of the changes for other members. I trust that our work throws light on all these issues, and makes a useful contribution to the continuing development of good governance in Hackney.
- 1.9. I thank all those who contributed in the course of this review: officers, witnesses and members of the Commission.

**Cllr Robert Chapman**

**Chair, Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission**

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## **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1. A review of this subject was first suggested as part of the annual consultation process associated with the development of the overview and scrutiny's work programme. The suggestion came from non-executive Councillors keen to explore and further understand the implications and opportunities of the mayoral model on the wider Council membership.
- 2.2. Hackney introduced a Mayor and Cabinet model of leadership in 2002 and is now nearing the end of a second term. Debate continues at a national level on the merits of a mayoral model and just as importantly on the potential for all Councillors to act as community leaders and more clearly define their role in what remains a relatively recent local government settlement.
- 2.3. Readers will note the absence throughout this report of any reference to the present directly elected Mayor. This is a careful, deliberate omission, reflecting the Commission's terms of reference which were to examine the impact of the model and not of the post holder. In addition the Commission undertook to consider:
  - the impact of the introduction of a directly elected Mayoral system and in particular on the borough's recent performance
  - the implications of the new system on the leadership of Hackney
  - the impact of the constitutional settlement on all elected members – Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny, etc.
  - any conclusions that may be drawn on the impact of the current constitutional arrangements on the relationship between Officers and Members
  - making a contribution to the process of defining appropriate expectations, approaches to support and models of engagement for all LBH Councillors resulting in the development of the community leadership role
- 2.4. The Commission gathered evidence and views from guests at six public meetings held between January and July 2009. It also conducted a survey of all Members which is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 2.5. Throughout the meetings it became increasingly apparent that this review is about the impact of the model on the roles for all Councillors as much as it is about the position of Mayor. This is reflected strongly in the nature of the findings for this review and in the Commission's recommendations.

### **3. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. We find that the mayoral model has achieved the majority of expectations placed on it relating to leadership of the borough. This Commission also finds that there is a relationship between the model's introduction and the significant improvements in the borough, although the exact relationship is difficult to distinguish from other factors that are also important. We make no recommendation to look again at other leadership options at this stage, although future reviews are required to ensure that the model still reflects the needs of Hackney as they change over time.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**No evidence was found to support a change to the leadership model in the borough. The Commission recommends that the mayoral model continues to be used in Hackney but that it should be reviewed again at an appropriate future date.**

- 3.2. The impact of the mayoral model has been positive for leadership of the borough but we have raised a number of questions about its affect on the role of ward Councillors. Debate over their role has been an issue for local authorities across the country since the introduction of an executive/non-executive split at the turn of the last century, so the issue is by no means unique to Hackney. Indeed, Hackney is considered by external organisations to be at the forefront in developing some of these roles. Others, however, remain problematic.
- 3.3. We are concerned that the support provided to ward Councillors across the authority does not help them be effective community leaders. Furthermore, it is apparent that Councillors do not feel that information is always appropriately shared and that information to assist them at ward level could be provided in more timely and accessible ways. Members, while appreciative of the work of the officers involved, felt that the general level of support to members needs improving and modernising so that it adequately helps ward councillors in their new roles. While we recognise that work is ongoing in the authority to address these problems, the Commission makes specific recommendations for improvement, as well as in support of those projects. The "21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor" is currently exploring how these roles should develop and be supported. The commission supports and wishes to encourage this work.

#### **Recommendation 2**

**We considered a number of current projects designed to enhance the role of ward Councillors through improved support and governance arrangements. The Commission makes two specific recommendations relating to the "21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor" project:**

**a)that the project explores how LB Hackney might enable and support Councillors, particularly in their role as community advocates**

**b)that the project's draft conclusions and recommendations are brought to this Commission for consideration and comment before final agreement**

- 3.4. The Commission believes that the natural relationship of Councillors with those that they represent is Ward based. It was held that current structures and systems of support do not always reflect this. We thus believe that consideration be given to how the Council could better assist ward based work and relationships.

**Recommendation 3**

**We request that the feasibility of implementing a ward-based system of information sharing, and better ways of supporting members in their ward based roles, be explored and reported to the Commission in July 2010.**

- 3.5. The Commission noted the legislative requirements around "Councillor Call for Action". This needs to be reflected in the Council's constitution. We also noted the progress made to ensure that LB Hackney is up to the challenge that this may bring, including robust systems allowing members to effectively pursue enquiries internally and also with outside bodies.

**Recommendation 4**

**We recommend that constitutional procedures and support mechanisms for introducing the Councillor Call for Action be progressed swiftly and reported back to the Commission by January 2010.**

- 3.6. We recognise how important it is for all Councillors to be able to engage with and support their neighbourhoods and residents. It is apparent that the current system of Neighbourhood Committees and Forums is not perceived to work and that the authority needs to explore alternatives, rather than ways to improve existing arrangements. We would like to further support the authority in this work by facilitating the involvement of all Councillors and residents who wish to contribute their views on how this might best be achieved, whilst also learning from the best examples in other local authorities.

**Recommendation 5**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny Board instructs this Commission to convene a special Overview and Scrutiny meeting, inviting all**

**Councillors and interested guests to debate the way in which Members are supported to engage with their local communities, including the future of Neighbourhood Forum/Committee arrangements in LB Hackney. The outcomes of this debate will be reported to the Corporate Director of Legal and Democratic Services in support of ongoing projects referred to above.**

#### **4. FINANCIAL COMMENTS**

- 4.1. The current governance model is funded from a number of budgets including Mayoral Office, held within the Chief Executive's directorate, and Services for Councillors, which is within Legal and Democratic Services. Any options considered will need to be funded from these budgets. The delivery of the Neighbourhood Forums comes from within the Services for Councillors' budget, but these Forums currently do not hold any budgets. The sources for ward based devolved budgets which are being explored will need to be identified and the accountability will need to be in line with financial regulations and standards. These proposals will be reviewed by finance when they are further developed.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1. The recommendations do not propose any changes which have significant legal implications and all can be addressed within the current legal and constitutional framework of the Council.
- 5.2. The ability of any councillor to refer a matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Board has been enacted in Section 21A Local Government Act 2000 (which was added by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) and The Overview and Scrutiny (Reference by Councillors)(Excluded Matters)(England) Order 2008. Although Council procedures have still to be settled and approved for insertion in the constitution, the legal framework upon which such procedures will be based was brought into force on 1 April 2009.
- 5.3. There are no other immediate legal implications arising from this report.

## 6. FINDINGS

### 6.1. Where the model came from

#### 6.1.1. National background

In 1998 the government proposed significant changes to the political management of local authorities. Its White Paper *“Modern Local Government: In touch with the People”* put forward a number of arguments in support of change, including the view that “people often do not know who is really taking the decisions. They do not know who to praise, who to blame or who to contact with their problems. People identify most readily with an individual, yet there is rarely any identifiable figure leading the local community.”<sup>1</sup>

6.1.2. In order to address these concerns, subsequent legislation (the *Local Government Act 2000*) required local authorities with a population above 85,000 to adopt one of the following three models:

- i. a directly elected mayor with a cabinet
- ii. a cabinet with a leader, or
- iii. a directly elected mayor and council manager

6.1.3. It was proposed that the ‘directly elected mayor with a cabinet’ model would require the Mayor to be elected by the whole electorate, rather than representing a ward and being nominated by fellow Councillors. Additionally, a local referendum was required in those authorities wishing to adopt this model, giving local people the opportunity to have their say. Once elected, the Mayor would select a Cabinet from among all the Councillors, and it would be “likely that these Cabinet Members would have portfolios for which they would take executive decisions acting alone.”<sup>2</sup>

6.1.4. For all Councillors, this new approach marked the end of “a committee system that had developed over more than a century.”<sup>3</sup> The government argued that these traditional structures had led to inefficient and opaque decision making, whereby significant decisions were “taken behind closed doors by political groups or even a small group of key people within the majority group.”<sup>4</sup>

6.1.5. In place of the committee system came a separation of roles between executive (i.e. the Mayor and Cabinet) and non-executive Councillors. Under any of the three models it was proposed that the role of the

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<sup>1</sup> DTLR (1998), *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Snape S., Leach S., and Copus C. (2002), *The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government*, (ODPM)

<sup>4</sup> DTLR (1998), *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People*

executive would be “to exercise political leadership on behalf of the council and to represent the area and its community on the wider stage. It would form a clear focus for negotiations with potential partners and others such as the Government, national and international public bodies and businesses considering investing in the council's area.”<sup>5</sup>

- 6.1.6. The responsibilities of the executive were set out as being to:
- translate the wishes of the community into action
  - represent the authority and its community's interests to the outside world
  - build coalitions and work in partnership with all sectors of the community, and bodies from outside the community, including the business and public sectors
  - ensure effective delivery of the programme on which it was elected
  - prepare policy plans and proposals
  - take decisions on resources and priorities, and
  - draw up the annual budget, including capital plans, for submission to the full council
- 6.1.7. For other Councillors it was proposed that separation of the executive would offer a “new, enhanced and more rewarding role”. This included the introduction of Overview and Scrutiny with its ‘call-in’ powers, enabling Councillors to review and question the decisions and performance of the executive. It was also envisaged that ‘backbench’ Councillors would “spend less time in council meetings and more time in the local community, at residents' meetings or surgeries.”<sup>6</sup>
- 6.1.8. The responsibilities of non-executive Councillors were to include:
- reviewing and questioning decisions taken by the executive
  - advising the executive on decisions and policy on local issues
  - reviewing policy, formulating policy proposals and submitting proposals to the executive
  - considering the budget proposed by the executive, proposing amendments and voting on the final budget, and
  - taking responsibility, either with or without members of the executive for those quasi-judicial functions, such as planning, licensing and appeals, which it would not normally be appropriate to delegate to an individual member of the executive

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

6.1.9. Since the introduction of these new arrangements, 11 local authorities have adopted the 'directly elected mayor and cabinet' model. Three of these are in London Boroughs, one of which is the London Borough of Hackney.

6.1.10. **Background to the model in Hackney**

In October 1998 LB Hackney established a Democracy Convention: an all-party committee with an independent Chair, Professor George Jones. This body was charged with considering how the democratic structures, process and leadership of the Council could be made more effective. Its report of June 1999 proposed a directly elected mayor and cabinet as the favoured model, with the role of the mayor being to:

- "provide community leadership and enhance partnership working
- be directly accountable to the public
- give direction to the Council
- be best placed to create the conditions for improved service performance
- generate interest and involvement in the democratic process, and
- have status to exercise influence at a cross-London and national level in the interests of the people of Hackney"<sup>7</sup>

6.1.11. The Convention also proposed specific roles for Cabinet, Scrutiny and Review, Neighbourhood Decision-Making, and other constitutional responsibilities.

6.1.12. At the Commission's meeting in July 2009, Professor Jones informed Members that the Convention concluded in favour of the Mayoral model in order to provide stability to the borough. He had conducted a similar review in Brent where the local political context had been "less unstable" and was able therefore to conclude that a leader and cabinet model would provide a more suitable direction. In Hackney, Prof. Jones added, "the parties had been bitterly divided and there were factions within parties". His report reflects clearly that one of the key issues at the time was to identify a model that would provide stability of leadership.

6.1.13. The Commission learned that, further to the government's policy proposals discussed above, in Hackney there was only a small group which liked the idea of an Elected Mayor<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Jones G. (June 1999), *Proposals for the new democratic structure in Hackney*, (LB Hackney)

<sup>8</sup> G&R Scrutiny Commission (June 2009), *Minutes of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009*, (LB Hackney)

6.1.14. Following the passing of the Local Government Act 2000, the government made these changes to local authority political management a requirement in all Councils. LB Hackney had prepared itself well for this development but by 2001, events had overtaken the Council and there was an expectation of greater consultation with the public, leading to a referendum. Consultation results from the period showed that only 1% of respondents strongly agreed that the existing process of decision-making was working well. Overall the results demonstrated that residents thought the Council was poorly run and that they were not aware of how it made decisions. Results from a MORI survey had also shown a close balance of preferences for the new constitutional models: 35% for the Leader and Cabinet model compares to 38% for the Mayor and Cabinet model. The Mayor and Council Manager model only registered 17%.

## **6.2. Impact of the model: national perspectives**

6.2.1. The main body of research that has measured the impact of these new council constitutions was led by Professor Gerry Stoker, then of the University of Manchester. Overall it was found that “across all types of authority there is strong agreement that the 2000 Act changes have delivered stronger leadership with a majority of councillor, officer and stakeholder respondents agreeing that ‘the role of the leader is stronger’, and ‘the leader has a higher profile’.”<sup>9</sup>

6.2.2. The Commission was not surprised to learn that officers and stakeholders are more positive about the reforms than Councillors, with well over half viewing the new arrangements as an improvement. Also, it was noted that Executive Councillors are more positive than non-executive Councillors. Significantly, the research shows that “taking Councillors, officers and stakeholders together, respondents from mayoral authorities are more favourable than from non-mayoral and from majority authorities than from no overall control authorities.” Further, it was found that Members and officers in Mayoral authorities were more likely than other respondents to indicate that leadership aims had been met.”<sup>10</sup> These findings are demonstrated in Table 1 below.

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<sup>9</sup> Stoker et al, (2007), *The New Council Constitutions: the outcomes and impact of the Local Government Act 2000*, (DCLG)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

**Table 1: Gerry Stoker: National Perceptions of impact of leadership forms by constitutional type<sup>11</sup>**

<i>Agree/strongly agree that...</i>	<i>Leader-cabinet</i>	<i>% Mayor</i>	<i>% Base</i>	<i>Statistical significance</i>
<b>Partnership</b>				
The council is better at dealing with cross-cutting issues	38	48	1481	**
The council's relations with partners has improved	43	57	1456	***
Backbench members are more engaged	10	12	1509	n/s
<b>Accessibility</b>				
It is easy to find out who has made specific decisions	40	48	1477	**
It is easier to find out about council policy	49	59	1503	*
The public is more involved in decision-making	15	30	1482	***
It is easier for women to become involved in council business	22	34	1501	***
It is easier for ethnic minorities to become involved in council business	19	34	1495	***
<b>Low Partisanship</b>				
Political parties dominate decision-making	47	29	1504	***
<b>Decision-making</b>				
Decision-making is quicker	45	61	1464	**
The role of leader has become stronger	68	79	1474	***
The leader of the council has a higher public profile	59	82	1478	***

n/s= non significant difference, \*=p. < .05, \*\*=p.<.01, \*\*\*=p. < .001

6.2.3. A review of the literature relating to the mayoral model in local government reflects a difficulty in distinguishing its impact from that of other leadership models: predominantly that of leader and cabinet. According to one study, “the direct election of an individual to local political executive office is the distinctive and defining feature of elected mayors. Indeed, within the English approach it is the only clear defining point between mayors and indirectly elected council leaders, as they hold broadly similar powers and responsibilities, set within a local separation of powers.”<sup>12</sup> This point is discussed in further detail below with specific reference to LB Hackney. It is important to note, however, this common view expressed in the literature: that there is little objective evidence to date which

<sup>11</sup> Gaines F. et al (June 2007), *Does Leadership Matter*, (DCLG)

<sup>12</sup> Copus C. (April 2006), *Leading the localities: executive mayors in english local governance*, (Manchester University Press)

separates the potential for effectiveness between a directly elected mayor and a leader. The substantive difference appears to be their means of appointment and removal, which lies with the electorate.

- 6.2.4. Beyond the academic literature and research there has been much commentary on the impact of the mayoral model, from think tanks and in the media, for example. A number of articles considered by the Commission during its review suggest that the mayoral model has not been popular nationally, not least as it is only being used in 11 authorities.
- 6.2.5. A consequence of the mayoral model is that it creates the potential for a lot power to be invested in one person. This issue was raised by Members of the Commission at its meeting in July 2009, at which Members noted that this potential is balanced by the roles of Full Council, Cabinet, and Overview and Scrutiny. Although the model can be considered to have worked well for Hackney, the borough has only ever had one directly elected mayor. While this review has not set out to consider the impact of individual post holders, this point was noted as important to highlight for future consideration.

### **6.3. Impact of the model in Hackney**

- 6.3.1. In 1998/9, at the time of the Democracy Convention, LB Hackney had one of the worst performance records in London. Since that time there has been a transformation in the quality of services and value for money provided to residents by their Council. In the last year the Audit Commission judged the authority to still be 'improving strongly' and building on its three-star rating. Progress was also recognised nationally by the Local Government Chronicle, with an award for Most Improved Council.
- 6.3.2. It is hard to distinguish the mayoral system from the improvements Hackney has experienced in recent years. The area's ability to deliver has changed beyond all recognition but it has not been possible to distinguish the level of influence particular contributions have made. However, taking a snapshot of the borough's current performance compared to a decade ago, there is a connection between having had a directly elected mayor and improvement. Indeed, at the Commission's meeting in July, Prof. Jones concluded that "under the model, LB Hackney has been transformed."<sup>13</sup>
- 6.3.3. A number of contributors to the review suggested that the model's greatest impact in Hackney has been stability. There have been many discussions about what difference the model has made but the prime one is knowing that the leader will be in post for four years.

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<sup>13</sup> G&R Scrutiny Commission (June 2009), *Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009*, (LB Hackney)

Having a direct mandate from the electorate also adds to the stability provided by the model. As stated above, stability was one of the main objectives in proposing the model: in that regard it can be said to have been a success.

6.3.4. The Commission also noted a public perception that the “buck stops at the Mayor’s desk”, as someone who will take responsibility. This demonstrates another achievement of the model in the borough which is to have delivered visible leadership, with the post holder’s name and face being widely recognised. The Commission was pleased to hear how children in local schools sometimes know who the elected mayor is and can name him. In this sense the model is helping to raise the profile of local democracy.

6.3.5. In 2004 the New Local Government Network, a think tank, published research based on a survey of 50 people within each of the authorities using the mayoral model. The clearest impact of elected mayors measured by the survey was that, on average, 57% of people asked could identify their mayor from a list of five, compared to 25% who could identify their leader in the control councils (using the leader and cabinet model). The research concluded that these early findings support “the theory that, at a basic level at least, elected mayors increase visibility and accountability to the public”<sup>14</sup>. LB Hackney conducted a similar survey in 2005 at which time 80% of respondents could name the current elected mayor. This wider recognition provides greater expectations of community leadership and makes the Mayor more of a “go to” person for local issues.

6.3.6. **Leadership for the whole borough**

A direct mandate from the electorate entails a wider community leadership role for elected mayors. It is expected that a mayor will speak up for all local services, perhaps more so than a council leader. There is a perception that mayors are elected for an area in addition to a Council. This is a view which is recognised by local partners in Hackney. Indeed it is reflected in the fact that the current mayor chairs Team Hackney, the borough’s Local Strategic Partnership.

6.3.7. The mayoral role has also been positive in terms of giving Hackney greater influence at regional and national levels: with organisations such as the Local Government Association, London Councils, the Greater London Authority, Government Office for London and other departments. It is arguable that the status of a mayor has enabled Hackney to interact with these organisations to a greater degree than had it operated with a leader and cabinet model.

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<sup>14</sup> Randle A. (Feb 2004), *Mayors Mid-term: lessons from the first eighteen months of directly elected mayors*, (New Local Government Network)

6.3.8. The new performance framework for local areas (the Comprehensive Area Assessment) is likely to result in a reframing of the role of local government to act as a greater focal point for all public services within an area. This assessment will reflect more the performance of all services within an area but Councils have a critical role in bringing focus to the shared efforts of partners. The Commission will be interested to consider whether the higher profile leadership offered by the mayoral model as a positive impact on the areas prospects for improvement.

6.3.9. **What Hackney Councillors say**

As part of this review the Commission conducted a survey of Hackney Councillors which sought their views the impact of a directly elected mayor. One questions asked respondents to consider roles for an elected mayor as suggested by the Local Government Association. These were to “provide strategic responsibility for engaging with the public; sustaining local partnership; implement the Council’s vision for the area; and ensure support for all Cllrs in the their scrutiny and ward roles”<sup>15</sup> Most respondents agreed with these roles in principle (81.9%) yet only half (40%) agreed that they are performed within Hackney. Judging from responses to other questions in the survey it is reasonable to assume that the majority of this gap rested on the question of support for all Councillors in their different roles.

6.3.10. **The role of Cabinet**

In LB Hackney the mayor and Cabinet take decisions collectively as the Council’s executive. This reflects the inclusive nature of decision-making in the borough. Individual portfolio holders do not have delegated responsibility for decisions and the Mayor has only taken individual decisions in rare, exceptional circumstances. This is a feature of the model in Hackney which doesn’t reflect the government’s early proposals in its 1998 White Paper. The 1999 report of the Democracy Convention in Hackney recommended that the Mayor delegate individual responsibility for decision making to cabinet members within their portfolios. It was suggested that “these matters could include virements, contract awards and media relations.”<sup>16</sup>

6.3.11. An elected Mayor could choose to take all decisions alone, and delegated decision-making does operate in other boroughs. Hackney’s approach has been to delegate decision-making to the Cabinet as a whole which requires a consensual approach to decision-making. The Commission heard at its meeting in June that

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<sup>15</sup> Local Government Association (July 2006) *Closer to People and Places*, (LGA)

<sup>16</sup> Jones G. (June 1999), *Proposals for the new democratic structure in Hackney*, (LB Hackney)

the borough's Cabinet has never voted on a decision, as that would indicate that the right decision hadn't been taken.

6.3.12. The direct mandate of an elected mayor can be said to give that individual overall responsibility for decisions made by the executive. The Commission was interested to know why individual decision-making isn't delegated to portfolio holders in Hackney, and heard that doing so could risk blurring the direct line of accountability between a Mayor and the electorate: the mayor would be responsible for decisions without necessarily knowing the reasoning behind them or agreeing with them. In this light the Commission supports the principle of collective decision-making by the authority's executive.

**6.3.13. The role of non-executive Councillors**

One of the most problematic features of the new council constitutions is embedding the changing role of non-executives. This finding is reflected consistently in national research and literature. For example, survey data from 2007 found little agreement in local government with the statement that 'backbenchers are more engaged' under the new arrangements (only 12% of Councillors and 9% of officers agreed); and only one in four respondents (28% of councillors and 24% of officers) agreed that the executive effectively responds to the concerns of non-executives.<sup>17</sup>

6.3.14. Another common research finding is that, while these challenges undoubtedly exist, the system does allow more scope for non-executive Councillors to influence the authority than under the previous committee model. This view was echoed in the Commission's deliberations throughout this review. For example, it was found that the overview and scrutiny system enables Members get involved with both policy development and policy review; and that a problem with the old system was that no-one knew who was responsible for decisions and no-one tested whether the decisions taken were the right ones or not.

6.3.15. The Commission heard how the authority is developing a range of opportunities whereby Councillors can have more impact on decision-making and in their local areas. These are discussed in more detail below, but a simple example is the new Councillor Call for Action mechanism which the Commission expects to see available in the near future.

6.3.16. Getting the non-executive Councillor role right is a national issue for local government. LB Hackney faces similar challenges to other boroughs in this regard and the Commission commends the work that is ongoing to provide exceptional support and services to all ward

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<sup>17</sup> Stoker et al, (2007), *The New Council Constitutions: the outcomes and impact of the Local Government Act 2000*, (DCLG)

Councillors as part of the organisation and residents' elected representatives.

## **6.4. The role of all Councillors**

- 6.4.1. The mayoral model can be said to have achieved its objective in Hackney of providing stable and visible leadership to the borough. However, it is more difficult to ascertain its affect on the role of 'ward' Councillors. Debate over their role has been an issue for local authorities across the country since the introduction of an executive/non-executive split, so the issue is by no means unique to Hackney. Indeed, Hackney is considered by external organisations to be at the forefront in developing some of these roles. Others, however, remain problematic and the Commission has given them detailed consideration for this review, as reported throughout the remainder of these findings.
- 6.4.2. Roles for non-executive Councillors were discussed by the Democracy Convention in 1999 which concluded that they should focus on three areas:
- i. Policy development, or "overview"
  - ii. Performance review, or "scrutiny"
  - iii. Neighbourhood Committees, proposed as a means of getting closer to the public and using participatory mechanisms; enabling Councillors to be champions for their areas.
- 6.4.3. The three areas were proposed to give a meaningful role for all Members, as well as to fulfill related needs, such as encouraging a constant dialogue between Councillors and officers; and a means by which the executive can get assistance from the wider Membership.
- 6.4.4. These roles were also intended to provide Members with more time outside of Council meetings, but they have proved even more consuming, if more valuable. The model has brought no savings of time for Councillors in Hackney. Our survey shows that non-executive Councillors in Hackney spend approximately 23 hours per month in Council meetings, 4 hours per month attending surgeries, and 10 hours per month attending community group meetings. National research also demonstrates that there has been an average increase in hours spent per month on Council activities by non-executive Members, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: average hours per month spent on council activities by non-executive members, 2003 and 2005<sup>18</sup>.

	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>
Working groups (task and finish groups)	8	7
Party meetings	6	6
Discussion with executive members	4	3
Communication with constituents	14	18
Area committee	5	4
Reading/preparation	-	17
Regulatory committees	-	7
Contact with stakeholders	-	6
Others	-	21

6.4.5. At its meeting in February 2009 the Commission considered research from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU), a think tank, which proposes five roles (a-d) for a ‘ward’ Councillor. These roles provided the Commission with a helpful structure in which to consider Councillors’ roles, the findings of which are discussed further below.

6.4.6. **Role A: Political representative**

“Political representation is seen as crucial for accountability as Councillors are elected on a local manifesto and bound by party discipline to implement this. Local political group dynamics have a strong influence on how the ward role is then conducted.”<sup>19</sup>

6.4.7. The Commission gave some consideration to this role, raising the following points in its discussions:

- To be a Councillor it is often necessary to be a member of a political party. Selection for candidacy as a Councillor within party groups is often based on at least two competencies: the ability to reflect the will of a majority of residents and therefore receive their vote, and the ability to uphold the views and policy of a political party.

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<sup>18</sup> Stoker et al, (2007), *The New Council Constitutions: the outcomes and impact of the Local Government Act 2000*, (DCLG)

<sup>19</sup> Cox E. (Jan 2007), *Frontline Councillor 2017: Empowering a new generation*, (LGIU)

- The party political system has its uses for ‘ward’ Councillors. There are occasions when it might be easier to progress matters outside of the party political system, whereas in other cases the opposite could be true.
- Election under the banner of a political party can help to bring stability to the authority and clarity to Councillors’ roles. The Commission considered that it would be unproductive for the Council to comprise a series of single issue pressure groups, but rather the role of Councillors is to mediate competing pressures and to make decisions on behalf of the whole population.
- Political groups provide a further opportunity for the executive to take soundings on forthcoming policy and decisions. Policy decisions are always taken in public but this dialogue provides essential support to Councillors with lead portfolios. There are always discussions between the Corporate Director and lead Member but the lead Member also has to bring in the views of the wider group.

**6.4.8. Role B: Community advocate**

"There are many instances when frontline Councillors can represent the views of their ward in wider strategic decision-making processes, particularly through Full Council and the Overview and Scrutiny system."<sup>20</sup>

**6.4.9. This second role proposed by the LGiU was reflected in a number the Commissions’ deliberations, as follows.**

- A key advocacy role performed by Councillors is acting as a two way conduit for information between residents and the local authority or its partners.
- Councillors expressed their desire to spend more time as community advocates and move the conduct of business away from the Town Hall. This chimed with the view from Members that they could be more productive were they able to spend less time sat on committees and be “released” to focus on what matters to residents, through community engagement.
- The Commission also posed a challenge to the community advocate role. It noted that, whilst there would always remain an important role for elected representatives, such positions should not be seen as exclusive from the ability and willingness to allow groups of like-minded individuals to get things done simply and quickly. Indeed, one view was put forward that Members of the public not only didn’t understand the role of a Councillor but in many cases could actually more successfully progress a matter than their elected representative.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

#### 6.4.10. **Roles C and D: Service improvement and service planning**

“Much of the locally-focused work of frontline Councillors can involve addressing service improvement through ward surgeries, casework, advice and brokering agreements with local service providers. Very often this role is one of troubleshooting when things have gone wrong.

“Some frontline Councillors are also involved in more proactive service planning roles such as facilitating neighbourhood forums or councils or area committees, playing an active role in regeneration partnerships and/or neighbourhood management programmes, and managing delegated budgets or small grants pots.”<sup>21</sup>

6.4.11. It is only possible to be a Councillor involved in service planning, service improvement and community engagement if such an individual was first a political representative and a community advocate (roles A and B above) and that these two roles represented the most important skills within the role of a Councillor.

6.4.12. Members also recognised that it is important for Councillors, when working in these capacities, to champion an individual’s welfare rights. Hackney is a borough in which many residents experience immense poverty and the Commission heard that “the role of a Councillor is to understand and consider how best to help alleviate such situations, how to ensure that poverty is minimised, and that appropriate services exist to respond to challenges the community faces.”<sup>22</sup>

#### 6.4.13. **Role E: Community engagement**

“There is increasing emphasis on frontline Councillors as community leaders. This can mean going beyond simple consultation and being involved in more elaborate engagement with local communities; identifying particular groups who might be vulnerable to exclusion or transient communities that need to be engaged; and mobilising residents to develop specific local campaigns, for example, against a hospital closure or for the improvement of a local park. The community engagement role also enables Councillors to represent strategic decisions and council priorities to local communities.”<sup>23</sup>

6.4.14. It is the role of a Councillor to help and enable people; to inform them what the Council does, can and should provide, how to progress matters of concern and why an issue may not be resolved as they hope. It was noted from experience that it is often best to assist

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> G&R Scrutiny Commission (2009), *Minutes of the Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009*, (LB Hackney)

<sup>23</sup> Cox E. (Jan 2007), *Frontline Councillor 2017: Empowering a new generation*, (LGiU)

residents in the development of reasonable and attainable targets, and to start a project and/or campaign slowly.

- 6.4.15. In some authorities, the role of ward Councillors can be affected by an officer's interpretation of what is and is not possible within budgets. This extends, for example, to being able to assist Members in having contact with people in their wards.

## **6.5. Overview and scrutiny**

- 6.5.1. The introduction of overview and scrutiny arrangements in local government was designed to be the principal check on the working of the executive. Evidence from national research on scrutiny indicates mixed performance, "partly due to the introduction of an entirely new role, partly due to the reluctance of Councillors in power to challenge their parties' executive decision-making, and partly due to a structural imbalance in the level of officer support for scrutiny compared to executive functions."<sup>24</sup>

- 6.5.2. The national research also reports that overview and scrutiny committees are effective at reviewing service outcomes but "weaker when used for exploring innovation, reconciling community opinion and acting as a forum for community debate. A little over a third of councillors (37%) and officers (35%) thought scrutiny was effective in holding decision-makers to account. The number of call-ins of executive decisions is generally very low, with a third of councils experiencing no call-ins at all. However six out of ten (60%) executive Councillors reported changing a decision as a result of a scrutiny review."<sup>25</sup>

- 6.5.3. As non-executives, many Councillors had initially been "upset that they had nothing to do whereas previously they had been able to demonstrate what they had achieved."<sup>26</sup> However, the fact that previously there were all-party committees taking decisions is irrelevant and the idea that they all influenced policy is a myth. Decisions under the old system, the Commission learned, were driven by party groups and by officers.

- 6.5.4. Members reflected the findings of the national review in that there is limited capacity to conduct overview and scrutiny compared to the full-time roles of the executive. It was suggested that the capacity of ward Councillors is limited in comparison to elected Mayors who are

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<sup>24</sup> Stoker et al, (2007), *The New Council Constitutions: the outcomes and impact of the Local Government Act 2000*, (DCLG)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> G&R Scrutiny Commission (2009) *Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009* (LB Hackney)

“full-time professionals with lots of support”. Another challenge for the overview and scrutiny system was that sometimes it can be too slow, often needing to think ahead a year or more.

- 6.5.5. What is good about the overview and scrutiny system is that Members get involved with both policy development and policy review. Whereas a problem with the old system was that no-one knew who was responsible for decisions and no-one tested whether the decisions taken were the right ones or not.
- 6.5.6. There have been relatively few (2) call-ins at LB Hackney since 2002. This may echo a finding of the national research above (the reluctance of Councillors in power to challenge their party’s executive decision-making) but alternatively the Commission questioned how effective the system could be as a means of providing checks and balances on executive power. It was understood, however, that the system shouldn’t be measured on how obstructive it can be: the fact that there hasn’t been a great number of call-ins could equally be taken as an indication that decisions are being made appropriately. Further, this number is not unusual on a national scale, where there is only an average of 3 call-ins per year in a local authority<sup>27</sup>. The Commission upheld the view that questioning by overview and scrutiny should, wherever possible, take place before a formal decision. For example, if there were an occasion where the budget might be called-in it would be seen as a failure of having consulted on it earlier on in the process. In addition, it was acknowledged that the two recent call-ins had been entirely legitimate, and that there is no other way they could have been done, but it does indicate a failure to engage Members earlier in the process of decision making.

## 6.6. Neighbourhood forums

National research reminds us that the Local Government Act 2000 also facilitated decision-making to be delegated to area committees and that “these have been established in just over half of authorities. So far, approximately six out of ten of these committees have decision-making powers.”<sup>28</sup>

- 6.6.1. Arrangements for neighbourhood, area, community, or ward working differ greatly from Council to Council. An important point of principle in order for this to succeed is that Councillors should be in the lead as facilitators, to believe in the value of wider involvement, and to receive some officer support. The Commission noted that, although

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<sup>27</sup> Pickering A. (2008), *The 2008 Annual Survey of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government*, (Centre for Public Scrutiny)

<sup>28</sup> Stoker et al, (2007, DCLG), *The New Council Constitutions: the outcomes and impact of the Local Government Act 2000*

currently facing a period of financial restraint, a case could be made for supporting this role as during a period of declining public finance it would be a good idea to develop neighbourhood committees and involve the public in a discussion about budget choices. This could provide a fruitful dialogue between Councillors and residents but needs to be broadly representative. Hence Councillors must be in the driving seat, take the Chair, and be enthusiastic: showing that representative democracy can work to enable further advances in participatory democracy.

- 6.6.2. There are four Neighbourhood Forums/Committees in Hackney and a project is underway currently to improve the way in which they are facilitated and supported. It is recognised that they ought to be a more effective means of community engagement as well as a more effective forum for Members to engage with residents. This project will include reviewing the implications of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 for neighbourhood working, including the Councillor Call for Action and ward initiatives.
- 6.6.3. The Commission reiterates its concerns, expressed in its report of the Team Hackney Scrutiny Review, about the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Forums/Committees in Hackney. These included the following comments from Members of the Commission:
- “that Hackney’s current structures do not work as well as they might and if they had a clearly defined purpose residents would more likely become engaged, making the forums worthwhile entities”
  - “meetings are often attended by more Councillors than residents”
  - “the forums and committees represent ineffective large scale surgeries”
  - “they cover too big an area”
  - “often Members don’t know what is on the agenda at Neighbourhood Forums in advance, let alone members of the public”
  - “the model has not been successful and that it needs a lot of work if it is to improve”
- 6.6.4. It is questionable whether Neighbourhood Forums in their current guise are the answer, even if reformed, as there is rarely a Neighbourhood Forum-shaped campaign. In this light, we are not in favour of putting in resources to prop up a system that doesn’t help Councillors fulfill the ‘ward’ function.
- 6.6.5. The Member Survey conducted for this scrutiny review reflects the views of Commission Members in relation to Neighbourhood working. Over 70% of respondents disagreed with the statements that “Neighbourhood Committees enable me to influence decision-making in Hackney” and that “As a Councillor, Neighbourhood Committees

inform my view of residents' needs". In addition the point made above regarding the scale of Neighbourhood Committees is reflected in the fact that 80% of respondents indicated that 'ward' level is where they would most like to see discussion about issues and to influence a potential decision or funding. This is compared to 20% indicating 'neighbourhood committee', 40% 'overview and scrutiny committees' and 30% 'full Council'.

6.6.6. Ward Councillor roles are more effective in some other local authorities where arrangements are in place for devolved ward budgets. It was found that, in relation to neighbourhood committees, a number of local authorities allowed for devolved budgets to be spent locally, largely on small-scale capital projects.

6.6.7. In addition to the specific points relating to devolved budgets, the Commission noted a number of examples and suggestions which might improve the operation of neighbourhood or 'local area' working:

- those who attend do so for the half hour debate on a topical issue, therefore the whole meeting should be about the debate on that local issue
- whatever system exists should not be set-up like a Council Committee with agendas and the usual format of proceedings
- Hackney could try making a ward/neighbourhood committee work in one area, from which others could learn
- putting items of particular interest on the agenda, and holding pre and post planning meetings, can be very helpful. In particular they can ensure that the agenda isn't prescribed by the Council. It was also noted that when items are proposed (such as a recent issue on parking) there is a report back to the Forum once action has occurred. It is important to give people a reason to be there and to provide them with practical answers.
- ensure that any Officers or partners only make short, simple presentations and are provided with clear guidelines (i.e. it's not an officer audience). It was suggested that officers need to be clear that Neighbourhood Forums are an opportunity for the public to tell officers things, not the other way around.

6.6.8. The Commission had considerable debate regarding the Mayoral model's impact on the role of ward Councillors. In concluding, it is suggested that the LB Hackney, under the auspices of the ongoing projects mentioned above, and the work of this Commission, should explore a more fundamental reorganisation of this role for 'ward' Councillors and residents. Such an exploration should include an opportunity for all 'ward' Councillors to contribute their suggestions, as it is they who will undertake the majority of the work.

## **6.7. Implications for the Civic Mayor or Speaker**

- 6.7.1. In LB Hackney the Speaker chairs meetings of Council and performs numerous civic duties. This is a role recognised traditionally as that of a local Mayor. Having a separate, well-known, directly elected Mayor can blur responsibility for civic functions; an issue which the Commission explored during this review. Members were fortunate in this regard to receive the thoughts of two recent Speakers (Cllrs Taylor and Rathbone) as well as the current directly elected Mayor.
- 6.7.2. The Commission heard from a number of sources that a lot of confusion has arisen as result of using the word “Mayor”. A directly elected Leader had been what was really needed. Before the model’s introduction, we all knew what a Mayor was: it was a full-time job, divorced from politics, similar to the role of a Constitutional Monarch, often also chairing Council meetings and trusted by all parties. It would be easier to switch the wording to a ‘directly elected leader’ but this is recognised as being impractical at this stage, particularly given that the major parties have indicated a wish to extend use of the mayoral model throughout England.
- 6.7.3. When the current system was set-up all Members were keen that the apolitical civic functions were continued (unlike in other Boroughs where elected Mayors do take on the civic role). It was felt that the role would be too much for one person but that retaining a separation between the Speaker (as the Civic representative) and a Mayor’s representative was important in order to make the non-partisan nature of the role transparent. It might not be any clearer if people were to write to the Mayor, asking for the Mayor, but get his representative, rather than an explanation that they should write to the Speaker.
- 6.7.4. Cllr Taylor informed the Commission that as Speaker he had undertaken approximately 450 social engagements in a year. It was suggested that an elected Mayor cannot reasonably be expected to do all of that and that such activities need to be done by someone representing the Mayor. Cllr Taylor’s recommendation was that the Mayor appoints someone who can do this very useful work. The position holder should be appointed in the same way as the Speaker is currently and invitations to undertake civic duties would be received by the Mayor’s office but passed on to this ‘Civic Representative’ role.
- 6.7.5. The Commission recognises that there are a number of approaches to reforming the civic role. These have been explored on previous occasions and again extensively during this review. The Commission recognises a degree of dissatisfaction with the current system but is not clear that any other presents a significant opportunity to provide more clarity.

## **6.8. Support to Councillors**

- 6.8.1. The Commission was interested to explore the extent to which having a Mayoral model affects the level of support available to Councillors. During these discussions the Commission's main focus was on the quality and speed of responses to Members' enquiries. There is an issue over whether responses come directly to Members from the relevant department or through the Member Support team. For example, it was mentioned that responses from the Revenues and Benefits department are of high quality, reflecting the fact that all are signed-off by the Assistant Director. Members reported that this did not appear to be the case for all departments, and it was felt that officers in the Member Support Unit could not be reasonably expected to quality assure all such responses. It was felt that the effectiveness of support to members had perhaps not developed as much as it might to support them in their roles under the new constitutional arrangements.
- 6.8.2. Echoing this view, the Commission's survey indicates that of the many roles which Councillors wish to perform, they feel there is limited ability to respond effectively to the public: 36.4% of respondents felt that "responding to the public" was important to their role but only 18.2% felt strongly that they were able to deliver. This is in contrast to other findings in the survey in which respondents felt strongly that they are able to match their aspirations in "mobilising the public", "listening to the public", "mapping public viewpoints", and "translating identified needs into action by the Council or its partners".
- 6.8.3. There are a number of issues relating to the support for Members which the Commission hopes that the ongoing projects referred to above will address. In particular the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor project provides a unique opportunity to map activities across the borough relating to the support to Councillors in their ward roles, and to identify means for improvement. It was not within the scope of this review to conduct that work but the Commission hopes that the successes and challenges identified throughout this report will assist that project in improving the role of "ward" Councillors under the new constitutional settlement.

### **Councillor Robert Chapman**

#### **Chairman of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission**

Scrutiny Officer: Gareth Wall, Interim Head of Overview and Scrutiny

Financial considerations: Bruce Bainbridge, AD Finance, Customer and Corporate Services and Finance and Resources

Legal considerations: Dawn Carter McDONALS, Interim Principal Solicitor, Children and Community Services

## **7. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

- Cllr Robert Chapman (Chair)
- Cllr Simche Steinberger (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Luke Akehurst
- Cllr Michael Desmond (until May 2009)
- Cllr Christopher McShane
- Cllr Mulready Jones (until May 2009)
- Cllr Emma Plouviez
- Cllr Ian Rathbone (from May 2009)
- Cllr Louisa Thomson (from May 2009)

## **8. CONTRIBUTORS TO THE REVIEW**

- Professor George Jones, London School of Economics
- Jonathan Carr-West, Local Government Information Unit
- Mayor Jules Pipe
- Cllr Geoff Taylor
- Gifty Edila, Corporate Director for Legal and Democratic Services, LBH
- Greg Lane, Head of Services for Councillors, LBH
- Joanna Sumner, Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance), LBH

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Copus C. (April 2006), *Leading the localities: executive mayors in english local governance*, (Manchester University Press)
- Cox E. (Jan 2007), *Frontline Councillor 2017: Empowering a new generation*, (LGiU)
- DTLR (1998), *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People*
- Jones G. (June 1999), *Proposals for the new democratic structure in Hackney*, (LB Hackney)
- Gaines F. et al (June 2007), *Does Leadership Matter*, (DCLG)
- Local Government Association (July 2006) *Closer to People and Places*, (LGA)
- Pickering A. (2008), *The 2008 Annual Survey of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government*, (Centre for Public Scrutiny)
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- Snape S., Leach S., and Copus C. (2002), *The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government*, (ODPM)
- Stoker et al, (2007), *The New Council Constitutions: the outcomes and impact of the Local Government Act 2000*, (DCLG)
- G&R Scrutiny Commission (2009) *Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th July 2009* (LB Hackney)
- G&R Scrutiny Commission (2009), *Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd February 2009*, (LB Hackney)
- G&R Scrutiny Commission (June 2009), *Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th June 2009*, (LB Hackney)

## Appendix 1: results of the Commission’s Member Survey

1. The areas listed below have been taken from research that suggests what a Councillor’s community leadership role is about. Please weight the following issues in order of the importance you attach to them.

	1 (most important)	2	3	4	5 (least important)
Creating an understanding across a locality of the different circumstances, needs, concerns and pressures of different communities	<b>36.4% (4)</b>	18.2% (2)	9.1% (1)	<b>36.4% (4)</b>	0.0% (0)
Balancing potentially conflicting needs in relation to allocation of resources and prioritisation of action	8.3% (1)	33.3% (4)	<b>50.0% (6)</b>	8.3% (1)	0.0% (0)
Leading debates about the justification for action and expenditure	9.1% (1)	<b>36.4% (4)</b>	27.3% (3)	18.2% (2)	9.1% (1)
Securing a consensus around issues in which changes of behaviour of individuals and communities may be required	30.8% (4)	7.7% (1)	15.4% (2)	<b>38.5% (5)</b>	7.7% (1)
Seeking support for new forms of regulation and enforcement that might be required	0.0% (0)	15.4% (2)	15.4% (2)	7.7% (1)	<b>61.5% (8)</b>

*Open responses:*

“As a provider of information to communities - many times my constituents only know about things proposed/decided/ happening because I tell them.”

“Acting as an advocate and facilitator”

2. An LGA publication, “Closer to people and places”, identified a number of roles of a Council leader or Mayor, including: strategic responsibility to engaging with the public; sustaining local partnership; implementing the Council’s vision for the area; and ensuring proper support for all Councillors, in their scrutiny, front line and local roles.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
To what extent do you agree with these?	<b>45.5% (5)</b>	36.4% (4)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)
To what extent do you agree that these are performed within Hackney?	10.0% (1)	30.0% (3)	<b>50.0% (5)</b>	10.0% (1)	0.0% (0)

3. To what extent do you agree that the Cabinet supports the Mayor to deliver his mandate in Hackney and those qualities detailed under Q2?

Strongly Agree	25.00%
<b>Agree</b>	<b>50.00%</b>
Neither agree or disagree	25.00%
Disagree	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	0.00%

4. How strongly do you agree that community empowerment/development is a core function of the role of the Councillor?

Strongly Agree	36.40%
<b>Agree</b>	<b>45.50%</b>
Neither agree or disagree	9.10%
Disagree	9.10%
Strongly Disagree	0.00%

5. From the Community development skills detailed below please select in order of importance to your role as Councillor. Also rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how you would rate your ability to deliver these?

Importance to your role (1 being the most and 7 being the least)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mobilising the public	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%
Listening to the public	<b>63.6%</b>	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%	9.1%
Learning from the public	9.1%	<b>27.3%</b>	18.2%	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	0.0% (0)
Mapping public viewpoints	<b>18.2%</b>	9.1%	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	9.1%	9.1%
Responding to the public	<b>36.4%</b>	27.3%	18.2%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Translating identified needs into action by the Council	18.2%	18.2%	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Translating identified needs into action by the Council's partners	<b>27.3%</b>	0.0%	18.2%	18.2%	<b>27.3%</b>	9.1%	0.0%

Your ability to deliver (1 being the most and 5 being the least)					
	1	2	3	4	5
Mobilising the public	27.3%	18.2%	<b>45.5%</b>	9.1%	0.0%
Listening to the public	27.3%	<b>36.4%</b>	27.3%	9.1%	0.0%
Learning from the public	18.2%	18.2%	<b>45.5%</b>	18.2%	0.0%
Mapping public viewpoints	18.2%	9.1%	<b>36.4%</b>	<b>36.4%</b>	0.0%
Responding to the public	18.2%	<b>54.5%</b>	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%
Translating identified needs into action by the Council	18.2%	18.2%	<b>36.4%</b>	27.3%	0.0%
Translating identified needs into action by the Council's partners	<b>36.4%</b>	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%	<b>36.4%</b>

6. Alongside the introduction of Mayors, Cabinets, and Scrutiny, recent local government legislation has encouraged the formation of Neighbourhood Committee arrangements. To what extent do you agree with the following comments regarding Neighbourhood Committees? (1 Being the most and 5 being the least agreeable)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Neighbourhood Committees enable the public to influence decision-making in Hackney	0.0%	18.2%	18.2%	27.3%	<b>36.4%</b>
Neighbourhood Committees enable me to influence decision-making in Hackney	0.0%	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	<b>54.5%</b>
As a Councillor, Neighbourhood Committees inform my view of residents' needs	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%	<b>45.5%</b>	27.3%
I feel well supported by the Council in my role on a Neighbourhood Committee	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%	<b>30.0%</b>

7. Through which channels detailed below do you mostly come into contact with residents? Please also identify three areas where you feel there may be greatest scope for improvement.

<b>Your method of contact with residents (select top 3)</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Mobilising the public	<b>50.0%</b>	25.0%	25.0%
Listening to the public	<b>62.5%</b>	12.5%	25.0%
Learning from the public	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>
Mapping public viewpoints	0.0%	0.0%	<b>100.0%</b>
Responding to the public	25.0%	<b>62.5%</b>	12.5%
Translating identified needs into action by the Council	25.0%	<b>50.0%</b>	25.0%
Translating identified needs into action by the Council's partners	0.0%	33.3%	<b>66.7%</b>
<b>Scope for improvement (select top 3)</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Mobilising the public	<b>50.0%</b>	0.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Listening to the public	25.0%	25.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Learning from the public	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>
Mapping public viewpoints	<b>50.0%</b>	0.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Responding to the public	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>
Translating identified needs into action by the Council	28.6%	<b>71.4%</b>	0.0%
Translating identified needs into action by the Council's partners	<b>57.1%</b>	14.3%	28.6%

8. a) on average how many hours a month do you spend in council meetings?

Response 1	10
Response 2	25
Response 3	8
Response 4	10
Response 5	20
Response 6	36
Response 7	15
Response 8	10-15
Response 9	20
Response 10	12
Response 11	80

b) on average how many hours a month do you spend attending Members surgeries?

Response 1	3
Response 2	1-2
Response 3	1
Response 4	2
Response 5	5
Response 6	1
Response 7	2
Response 8	4
Response 9	5
Response 10	4
Response 11	18

c) on average how many hours a month do you spend attending community group meetings (as a Councillor rather than as a member of that group)?

Response 1	4
Response 2	10
Response 3	8
Response 4	10
Response 5	15
Response 6	6
Response 7	4
Response 8	4
Response 9	15
Response 10	12
Response 11	20

9. In your opinion what more could the Council do to provide you with more support in your role?

Better members support (casework/research)
Clearer routes for Cabinet/Chief Officer action
an email/phone/snail mail system that enabled me to deliver targetted non-political information to groups of constituents
Proper admin support for back benchers
Help with mailings
A sense that they are interested in what we do
Liaison officer for each of the partners, equivalent to member support
better members rooms
Members' support should be there to support, should liaise with Councillors on what they need, not what officers think we need.
The services to back bench councillors should be on par with services given to the Mayor and Cabinet members, as we are elected members as well. There should be a "can do" attitude, which is sadly lacking.
I would welcome more access to the council's officer core so that I could better contribute / influence policy and programmes delivered by the council.

10. How would you rate the following?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Extremely poor
The range of subjects offered by the Member Training programme	0.0%	18.2%	<b>45.5%</b>	36.4%	0.0%
The quality of support offered by the Council	0.0%	18.2%	27.3%	<b>45.5%</b>	9.1%
The level of opportunity you have to engage with the Mayor	0.0%	<b>36.4%</b>	18.2%	27.3%	18.2%

11. Do you feel you are most able to influence decisions? (Please tick the relevant boxes)

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Formally	0.0%	<b>60.0%</b>	40.0%
Informally	30.0%	<b>70.0%</b>	0.0%
In your ward	30.0%	<b>70.0%</b>	0.0%
At the strategic level	0.0%	<b>60.0%</b>	40.0%

12. At which level of Council business would you most like to see discussion about issues and to influence a potential decision or funding? (tick as many that apply)

	Response percent
Street or neighbourhood level	40%
<b>Ward</b>	<b>80%</b>
Neighbourhood forum	20%
Overview and Scrutiny Committees	40%
Full Council	30%

13. Please use this space to add anything that has not been covered elsewhere in this survey.

Agree with elected Mayor - has been good for Hackney. Clearer strategy, clearer accountability, less rows.
Not so sure what is the most effective residual role for other elected members and council hierarchy focuses primarily on mayor and Cabinet.
I don't know and have very little formal feedback on what the mayor and the cabinet do - it feels as if there is a two-tier system with most power and influence residing with cabinet and mayor and other councillors being made to look busy/influential when they are not
As a back bench councillor because you don't have the information it's difficult to influence the policy and programmes of the council.