

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE CABINET****HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2020****ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)****Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs	
Councillor Sirajul Islam	(Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing)
Councillor Rachel Blake	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Children and Schools)
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	(Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Social Inclusion
Councillor Asma Islam	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Environment
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Planning
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Public Realm

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	
Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor James King	
Councillor Andrew Wood	

Officers Present:

Stephen Bramah	(Deputy Head of the Mayor's office)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Lucy Fordham	Senior Communications Officer
Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Chris Humphreys	(Senior Communications Officer)
Asmat Hussain	(Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)

Debbie Jones	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Ronke Martins-Taylor	(Divisional Director, Youth & Commissioning)
Neville Murton	(Corporate Director, Resources)
Jenny Pittam	Interim Head Contract Services
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Karen Swift	Divisional Director, Housing
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Matthew Vaughan	(Political Advisor to the Conservative Group, Democratic Services, LPG)
Anthony Walters	(Head of Corporate PMO)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)
Joel West	(Senior Democratic Services Officer)

AGENDA ORDER

During the meeting the Mayor agreed to take Agenda Item 6.4 (Contract Services Supplier Contracts 2020/21) ahead of Agenda Item 6.3 (LBTH/THH Mayoral Office Police and Crime (MOPAC)) to allow Members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in Item 6.3 to leave the meeting after Item 6.4 concluded. For clarity, the minutes are presented in the order the items appear on the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillors Sirajul Islam, James King and Motin Uz-Zaman declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests due to being leaseholders or tenants of properties on Tower Hamlets estates and left the meeting for the during of Agenda Item 6.3 (LBTH/THH Mayoral Office Police and Crime (MOPAC)).

It was also noted that Councillors Asma Islam and Sabina Akhtar were Members of the Tower Hamlets Homes Board and so had 'Other Interests' in the same item. They remained in the meeting for the discussion.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 26 February 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The **Mayor** introduced and welcomed four new Cabinet Members as follows:

- Councillor Asma Islam (Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share – Leading on Environment))
- Councillor Dan Tomlinson (Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share – Leading on Public Realm))
- Councillor Mufedah Bustin (Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share – Leading on Social Inclusion))
- Councillor Eve McQuillan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share – Leading on Planning))

He also thanked Councillors Amina Ali and David Edgar who were leaving the Cabinet for all their hard work whilst they had been Members of the Cabinet.

The **Mayor** then noted the recent death of George Floyd in the United States of America and the evidence of police brutality as the cause. He read a statement which recognised the issues highlighted and the strong campaigning both in America and also in the UK against injustice and the need to fight for equalities. He stated that the Borough of Tower Hamlets was 'No Place for Hate' and that Bromley Public Hall had been illuminated with purple lights to show our solidarity with that campaign.

He then commented on the recent national report on the disproportionate impact on BAME communities of Covid-19. This was an issue the Council had been dealing with in conjunction with its partners looking at the many reasons for this including around housing, pollution and poverty. There was a lot more to do and this was a priority. It was, however, good to report that overall infection rates had fallen in the Borough.

He called a minutes' silence to recognise all those who had lost their lives in the pandemic and also to show solidarity to those facing persecution because of their background.

Finally the **Mayor** welcomed the decision of the courts to quash a planning permission decision in relation to the Westferry Print Works site, an application and process the Council had many concerns about.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted in respect of all four reports. These were considered during discussion of each agenda item.

In addition, Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided Cabinet with an update on the recent work of his Committee.

In particular he reported on the work of the Committee in scrutinising the Council's response to Covid-19 covering a wide range of issues such as strategic oversight, community engagement and the work of key sectors. The Committee was also reviewing how the Council was developing its recovery operations and longer term impact on the borough.

The **Mayor** thanked him for his update.

5.2 Any Unrestricted Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 LBTH response to the Covid19 Pandemic

The **Mayor** introduced the comprehensive report on the Council's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The report set out details on the Council's reaction to the situation and showed both the chronology and also looked at some of the biggest issues the Council had dealt with such as around social care and changing work arrangements. He noted the anxiety the pandemic had caused within the community.

The Council had been working hard with its partners to support those who were sick as well as the wider community.

The Chief Executive paid particular tribute to the two members of staff who had been lost to Covid-19. He also thanked everyone who helped ensure there was a strong degree of agility, creativity and effort to best respond to the needs of local people, particularly services for vulnerable people.

During discussion many issues were noted or discussed including:

- Questions raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the officer responses provided.
- Praise was given to all those who had worked so hard to support residents and council services during this time with particular comment on Somen Banerjee (Director of Public Health) for his work with the Council's Health Partners and Denise Radley (Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community) for her work on health services but also her work leading on the Council's emergency planning response.
- The financial challenges to the Council were noted.
- A discussion took place on how the Council was supporting specific groups of residents including those who were shielding, rough sleepers and residents from BAME communities.
- The Council was using a number of methods to regularly communicate with residents about the pandemic and the help that was available.

Officers undertook to provide written responses in relation to the financial costs of the pandemic to the Council and also on the work that had been

taking place to learn about the differential impact on a range of groups of residents.

It was noted that the pandemic was not over and the next report would be looking at how the Council would look to tackle future challenges.

The **Mayor** thanked everyone for their hard work and support and **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the contents of this report outlining the council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and plans for the proposed next steps.

6.2 Covid-19 Pandemic - Reconstitution to Recovery

The **Mayor** introduced the report setting out the Council's initial planning around reconstituting and recovery of services. A lot had been learned on new ways of delivering services but equally there were significant financial challenges. It was likely that the Council would look different at the end of the process with increased partnership working, making use of new technological solutions and adapting to new service demands.

During discussion a number of points were noted including that:

- Schools were thanked for the key role they had played in support vulnerable children and families as well as providing online learning for all pupils.
- As Council services were restarted, safety would be the Council's watchword and work was ongoing with staff and unions around safe working practices.
- The Council was taking care to monitor staff wellbeing.
- The pandemic was ongoing and would require careful management.
- The Council was supporting businesses where possible and had worked hard to distribute government grant funding with over 4,700 receiving support.
- A project was ongoing to enable the area's Markets to open safely.
- A large number of ideas were being evaluated to help support pedestrians and cyclists including by widening pavements and improving cycle lanes.
- The pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses were noted.

The **Mayor** thanked everyone for their hard work and contribution to the debate and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the approach to reconstitution and recovery set out in this report.

2. To note the estimated impacts on the Council's financial position and recognise the need to ensure that budget sustainability underpins the proposed actions in this report.

6.3 LBTH/THH Mayoral Office Police and Crime (MOPAC)

The **Mayor** introduced the report proposing that the Council entered into a contract to procure additional police and security officers to operate on the Council's estates. He noted that crime and the fear of crime were big priority issues for residents and that this action would help address those concerns.

The programme had a good track record and the Council had a good relationship with the local police force. It was also explained that the report proposed the cost of the service be recouped through small charges to tenants and leaseholders.

The **Mayor** noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses and in particular noted concerns around the potential costs to residents. He highlighted that a consultation exercise with residents was due to take place in the summer and he stated that he wished to see the results of that consultation before the Council proceeded with charging for services. He therefore amended the recommendations to that effect and **agreed** the amended recommendations.

RESOLVED

1. To authorise the Corporate Director, Place to agree a 3-year Partnership Plus Agreement with MOPAC in line with the contents of this report.
2. To agree that residents be consulted on the proposal that they be charged for the additional police and security services provided by the Police team under the Partnership Plus Scheme and by Parkguard as set out in this report.
3. To agree that following the consultation exercise, and then further consultation with the Mayor, residents will be charged for the additional police and security services provided by the Police team under the Partnership Plus Scheme and by Parkguard in line with this report.

6.4 Contract Services Supplier Contracts 2020/2021

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She explained that this was in the main a technical report allowing extensions to contracts jointly let as part of a London-wide consortium with 6 other local authorities.

It was noted that Havering OneSource managed the contracts and there had been some issues in that service which were now having to be addressed. The contract extensions would give time for this to be sorted out.

The **Mayor** noted that the Council had received assurances that the contracts were now being managed appropriately but he also noted that the Council were monitoring the situation.

Finally he noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officers responses and explained that he would welcome additional scrutiny in this area. He then **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To approve, in line with the timetable set out in the report, the contract extensions that are let jointly for the Procurement Across London (PAL) group.
2. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Children and Culture, to authorise monthly expenditure until new contracts have been awarded by Havering One Source.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Nil items.

9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business

Nil items.

10.2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil items.

11. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 7.25 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS