

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL**

**HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2009**

**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5  
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Helal Abbas	Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor Rofique U Ahmed	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Anwara Ali	Councillor Abjol Miah
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Fozol Miah
Councillor M. Shahid Ali	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Tim Archer	Councillor Abdul Munim
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Tim O'Flaherty
Councillor Lutfa Begum	Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	Councillor Lutfur Rahman
Councillor Rupert Eckhardt	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor M. Mamun Rashid
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Muhammad Abdullah Salique
Councillor Fazlul Haque	Councillor A A Sardar
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Carli Harper-Penman	Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Clair Hawkins	Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Ahmed Hussain	Councillor Dulal Uddin
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Waiseul Islam	Councillor Salim Ullah
Councillor Ann Jackson	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Councillor Denise Jones	

**The Mayor, Councillor Muhammad Abdullah Salique in the Chair**

The meeting opened at 7.37 p.m.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Philip Briscoe, Alex Heslop, Shirley Houghton and Adbul Matin.

**RESOLVED**

That the apologies for absence be noted.

[Note from clerk: Councillor Shirley Houghton wished it recorded that she had been advised not to attend the meeting following possible exposure to contagious illness.]

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors made declarations of interest in items included on the agenda as follows:

Councillor	Item	Type of interest	Reason
Helal Abbas	8.1	Personal	Trust Keen Students
Helal Abbas	11.6	Personal	Employment provides support to TELCO
Helal Abbas	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Helal Abbas	11.10	Personal	Member of the Tower Hamlets Credit Union
Ohid Ahmed	5.1.2	Personal	Ward Councillor for East India and Lansbury
Ohid Ahmed	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Ohid Ahmed	11.13	Personal	Ward Councillor for East India and Lansbury
Ohid Ahmed	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder of RSL property and member on Tower Hamlets Homes Board
Rajib Ahmed	5.1.3	Personal	Ward Councillor
Rajib Ahmed	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Rajib Ahmed	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder and member of THCH
Rofique Ahmed	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Rofique Ahmed	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder of Council property and I sit on the board of Ocean Regeneration Trust (ORT Board)
Anwara Ali	11.7	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Mohammed Shahid Ali	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Shahed Ali	11.4	Personal	Involved in previous campaigns on this matter
Shahed Ali	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit

Abdul Asad	8.1	Personal	Works for a Youth Service provider
Abdul Asad	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Abdul Asad	11.10	Personal	Member of Co-operative Party
Abdul Asad	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder
Lutfa Begum	5.1.2	Personal	Ward Councillor Limehouse
Lutfa Begum	11.9	Personal	Employed by NHS
Phil Briscoe	5.1.2	Personal	Ward Councillor for Blackwall and Cubitt Town
Phil Briscoe	5.2.2	Personal	Ward Councillor for Blackwall and Cubitt Town
Phil Briscoe	11.9	Personal and Prejudicial	Director of a company with a professional relationship with Atos Origin
Alibor Choudhury	5.2.3	Personal	Ward Councillor For St. Dunstan's and Stepney Green
Stephanie Eaton	5.1.3 & 11.5	Personal	Live in Copenhagen Place adjacent to Brickfield Gardens
Fazlul Haque	10.2	Personal	Member of the Constitution Working Party
Fazlul Haque	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Fazlul Haque	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder
Shafiqul Haque	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Shafiqul Haque	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder; Council representative on Board of Tower Hamlets Homes; and member of THCH
Carli Harper-Penman	11.2	Personal	Ward Councillor for Bethnal Green South
Carli Harper-Penman	11.7 & 11.18	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Carli Harper-Penman	11.10	Personal	Member of the Co-operative Party
Clair Hawkins	5.1.1 & 11.15	Personal	Member of UCU
Cllr Shirley Houghton	5.2.1	Personal	Ward Councillor for Millwall

Cllr Shirley Houghton	11.9	Personal and Prejudicial	Officer of a company with a professional relationship with Atos Origin
Sirajul Islam	11.2	Personal	Ward Councillor
Sirajul Islam	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Sirajul Islam	11.14	Personal	Board member of Tower Hamlets Community Housing
Waiseul Islam	11.7	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Waiseul Islam	11.14	Personal	Member of Tower Hamlets Community Housing
Ann Jackson	11.2	Personal	Support of charity during Mayoral year
Denise Jones	7.3	Personal	Owner of business in Brick Lane
Denise Jones	8.1	Personal	PCT Non-Executive Board Member and Governor, Mulberry School
Denise Jones	11.7	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Denise Jones	11.14	Personal	Council nominee to the Boards of Tower Hamlets Homes and East End Homes
Azizur Rahman Khan	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder
Rania Khan	11.4	Personal	Member of Campaign against sex encounter establishments.
Rania Khan	11.14	Personal	Poplar Harca Board Member
Rania Khan	11.15	Personal	Teacher/NUT member
Shiria Khatun	5.1.2	Personal	Ward Councillor East India and Lansbury
Shiria Khatun	11.14	Personal	Tenant of Poplar Harca and a Council nominee for the Poplar Harca Board
Abjol Miah	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Fozol Miah	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Harun Miah	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Harun Miah	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder

Mohammed Abdul Munim	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Ahmed Omer	8.1	Personal	Employed by organisations involved in delivering the Children & Young People's Plan (other than the Council)
Ahmed Omer	11.2	Personal	Affiliated with the Bethnal Green Tube Disaster Memorial Campaign
Ahmed Omer	11.4	Personal	I live within 100 metres of a sex encounter venue
Ahmed Omer	11.14	Personal	Resident of RSL
Lutfur Rahman	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Oliur Rahman	5.1.1	Personal	Supporter of Lifelong Learning campaign
Oliur Rahman	5.2.3	Personal	Ward Councillor St. Dunstan's and Stepney Green and has supported Tenants Group
Oliur Rahman	11.4	Personal	Involved in group campaigning against sex encounter establishments
Oliur Rahman	11.14	Personal	RSL tenant (Toynbee)
Oliur Rahman	11.15	Personal	Supporter of Lifelong Learning campaign group
Mohammed Mamun Rashid	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Muhammad Abdullah Salique	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
A. A. Sardar	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
A. A. Sardar	11.14	Personal	Board member of Poplar Harca and leaseholder
Rachael Saunders	11.4	Personal	Has been involved in OBJECT/Fawcett campaigning on strip clubs, and a signatory to published letters on the subject
Bill Turner	11.2	Personal	Donated money to the Bethnal Green Tube memorial, attended services and advocated on their behalf
Bill Turner	11.4	Personal	Appeared on TV against sex encounter establishments

Bill Turner	11.6	Personal	Attended TELCO meetings in the past
Bill Turner	11.10	Personal	Member of the Co-operative Party
Bill Turner	11.15	Personal	Member of affiliated organisation (UNISON)
Dulal Uddin	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Abdal Ullah	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Abdal Ullah	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder
Salim Ullah	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder
Motin Uz-Zaman	11.7 & 11.8	Personal	Holder of Council issued parking permit
Motin Uz-Zaman	11.14	Personal	Leaseholder and member on RSL Board nominated by the Council

### 3. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February and Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009 be confirmed as correct records of the proceedings and the Mayor be authorised to sign them accordingly.

### 4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### (i) Councillor Abdul Matin

The Leader of the Council stated that Members were aware that Councillor Abdul Matin had recently been seriously assaulted. Councillor Rahman expressed his shock at the attack and stated that Member and officers were working closely with the Police to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

Councillors from each of the political groups had visited Councillor Matin and a number of Members spoke to support the Leader's comments, to offer their best wishes for Councillor Matin's speedy recovery and their condemnation of the perpetrators. Councillors paid tribute to Councillor Matin's contribution to the Council and the community over many years.

Councillor Stephanie Eaton responded on behalf of Councillor Matin and stated that she would pass on to him the Council's comments and good wishes.

**(ii) Bow Gurdwara Fire**

The Leader of the Council referred to the serious fire that had occurred recently at the Gurdwara in Bow resulting in the tragic loss of a place of worship and scriptures sacred to the Sikh community in east London.

Councillor Rahman expressed his shock at the fire and offered his heartfelt sympathy to the Sikh community. One of the key factors defining Tower Hamlets was the respect shown by local people to each others' religious beliefs and he deplored anything that could hamper this.

Following the fire, Council officers had worked closely with the Police, the Gurdwara Management Committee and the Interfaith Forum to discuss both the investigation into the cause of the fire and to address the need for alternative facilities in the short term. The Council would continue to offer any assistance that was possible.

**(iii) Parking charges at markets/Crime figures**

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, wished all present both a Happy St. George's Day and best wishes for the Bengali New Year. He went on to announce that in order to enable the borough's street markets to flourish the Council had introduced free parking on Saturdays in the vicinity of certain markets and would now also be freezing market fees and charges.

Councillor Ullah also reported that recently published crime figures showed that overall crime in the borough had fallen by almost 17%. The Council would continue to prioritise community safety and had secured an additional 20 Police officers to ensure the borough continued to be a safer place to live, work and visit.

**(iv) Portrait of the Head of State**

Councillor Tim Archer announced that he made a personal donation of a portrait of the Queen which had been placed on the wall of the Chamber and he hoped that it would be replaced by a more permanent portrait.

**5. TO RECEIVE ANY DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS****DEPUTATIONS****5.1.1 Deputation re: Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mr. Robert Foth addressed the meeting in support of the deputation. He brought to Members' attention the fees that some students were having to pay and the effect he felt this would have on lifelong learning in the borough.

Mr. Foth responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Clair Hawkins, Lead Member for Children's Services, responded to the matters raised by Mr. Foth and in doing so declared an interest as she was a former ESOL tutor and a member of the same union. Tower Hamlets has a proud record and strong support for adult education and remains committed to continuing that support. For Further Education Colleges, the fees policy is agreed by the College Board. A Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) ESOL for Work programme would be giving over 600 individuals the opportunity to access ESOL at entry level.

### **RESOLVED**

That the deputation be referred to the Corporate Director, Children's Services for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

#### **5.1.2 Deputation re: establishment of a Tesco Metro store in Poplar**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mr. Ajai Kapoor addressed the meeting in support of the deputation concerning the establishment of a Tesco Metro store in Poplar which he felt would adversely affect a lot of small businesses in the area.

Mr. Kapoor responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Marc Francis, Lead Member for Housing and Development, responded to the matters raised by Mr. Kapoor. He said that it was understandable that people have concerns about small businesses being adversely affected in these difficult economic times. However, a review of Tesco's land holdings in the borough showed that it had nine stores across Tower Hamlets and Councillor Francis felt it was difficult to sustain a view that there is an unacceptable proliferation of Tesco Metro and Express stores across the borough. In addition, competition between retailers was not a valid planning consideration.

Nevertheless, officers were working hard on the emerging Core Strategy LDF seeking to develop policies to ensure that retail provision within the borough's town centres produced a mix of retail uses to suit all tastes, needs and wallets. Councillor Francis said that he would work with the officers and Mr. Kapoor to explore ways in which local small businesses could be supported.

### **RESOLVED**

That the deputation be referred to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

At this point (8.20pm) the Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow those Members who needed to observe prayers to do so.

The meeting resumed at 8.37pm.



### **5.1.3 Deputation re: lighting to be installed in Brickfield Gardens, E14**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Messrs. Craig Aston and Graham Collins addressed the meeting in support of the deputation, Mrs. Valerie Lashmar being unable to attend. Messrs. Aston and Collins said that the gardens were attracting people from other areas who were carrying out anti-social behaviour after dark, and asked that lighting be installed as soon as possible.

Mr. Collins responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener responded to the matters raised by the deputation. He said that this area had not been identified as a hot spot for crime or anti-social behaviour but the Council was aware that concerns had been raised by residents about young people gathering in the centre of Brickfield Gardens and it had been considering the best way to address these concerns, including through the provision of lighting.

The cost of purchasing and installing lighting had been estimated at £27,000 but there was currently no budget for the scheme and sources for funding were being explored, including the possibility of Section 106 contributions. The Council would continue to seek funding and would implement a lighting scheme as soon as it was able.

### **RESOLVED**

That the deputation be referred to the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

### **PETITIONS**

#### **5.2.1 Petition re: Arnhem Wharf Primary School**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Nazel Onder addressed the meeting in support of the petition which opposed the expansion of Arnhem Wharf Primary School and called for a further investigation to be made into the management of the school. Ms. Onder also said that she had passed the petition signed by 47 parents to Councillor Snowdon.

Ms. Onder responded to questions from Members of the Council. Councillor David Snowdon then made a personal explanation about the conversations he had had with Ms. Onder and the action that he had taken in relation to the petition.

Councillor Clair Hawkins, Lead Member for Children's Services, responded to the matters raised by Ms. Onder by explaining that the expansion proposals had been subject to extensive consultation with parents, pupils and staff from

7<sup>th</sup> May 2008 to February 2009. Only 23 responses had been received by parents from the Local Authority's consultation paper of which 19 were in favour, 3 against and 1 unsure. The Local Authority had consulted widely on the expansion proposals and had followed the procedures specified by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The expansion had been designed to meet the rising need for school places in Tower Hamlets.

Councillor Hawkins further reported that the bus stop mentioned in the petition would not be moved and London Buses had also agreed to provide a bus shelter. In addition, more space would be made available in the dining area to accommodate additional students.

### **RESOLVED**

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Children's Services for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

#### **5.2.2 Petition re: Millwall Park rugby pitch**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mr. James Eason addressed the meeting in support of the petition, Mr Mike Costin being unable to attend. Mr Eason gave a background to the history of the club and the benefits of playing matches on the Millwall Park rugby pitch for both the men's and women's teams.

Mr. Eason responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Rofique Ahmed, Leader Member for Culture and Leisure said that a review was under way of the potential impact of the use requested on other pitches and users and a meeting would be arranged with the club once this was complete.

### **RESOLVED**

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

#### **5.2.3 Petition re: vandalism and management of the Exmouth Estate**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mr. Dave Coker addressed the meeting in support of the petition. He highlighted the concerns of the residents on the Exmouth Estate regarding the high level of vandalism, which Mr Coker felt illustrated the poor management of the estate by Swan Housing.

Mr. Coker responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Marc Francis, Lead Member for Housing and Development, thanked Mr. Coker for his presentation and reported that since the last Council meeting had received a petition on a related issue, he had visited the

estate a further three times. Very few of the security doors were operational and Councillor Francis felt this failure to deliver was not good enough. He had therefore raised the matter himself with Swan's Regional Manager. A revised schedule had been provided but Councillor Francis could not have full confidence that this would be achieved, so the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal would meet with the Chief Executive of Swan Housing, Mr. John Sinnett, at the earliest opportunity. Councillor Francis would update Members and representatives of the Exmouth Leaseholders Group again following that meeting.

## **RESOLVED**

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

## **6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

### **6.1 Question from Ms. Dinah Glover to the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Rofique Ahmed**

"The 'Get Active' scheme launched for LAP1 residents to use York Hall gym facilities funded by Government money allows any resident (16 - 74 years) who is not currently a member of the Wellness gyms to pay a one off payment of £2.70 plus £1 per session.

Monthly membership of the gym is £27.95 (£335.40 pa). Under the 'Get Active' scheme you can use the gym 3 x 52 weeks of the year and the total cost is £158.70.

The Government money was meant to target people that are inactive. This scheme mainly subsidises anyone who was a member of a different gym or has recently moved into the area. Why was this money not targeted at inactive people who need the encouragement and secondly why allow a situation that current gym members have a double whammy of both paying more and subsidising their neighbours who may be wealthier than them?"

### **Response of the Lead Member**

There is no evidence that those who have signed up cancelled membership at other gyms to join the scheme. On the launch day when the scheme began in October those who were signing up were local residents who undertook no, or very little, exercise. The scheme was targeted at LAP1 residents as this is the area in Tower Hamlets with the lowest participation rates for physical activity (Active People Survey 2007). Current members are not subsidising those on the scheme as it is funded by an external grant from Sport England.

The Get Active Programme is for one year at York Hall Leisure Centre only and gives subsidised use for four types of activity including the Gym. GLL Membership, however, gives use of all the leisure centres

in the borough, with a greater variety of activity as well as other benefits including access to courses, crèche, discount on other bookings and members only activities which are not available under the Get Active Scheme.

**Summary of supplementary question from Ms Glover:**

What is the value of the grant from Sport England? How much of the grant has been spent so far and what are the spending plans for the next 2 years of the 3 year programme? How will you be monitoring the scheme's success and ensuring that it meets its targets and criteria? Do you think that this non-targetted, capture all, spray gun approach is the best method of ensuring that this lottery funded money reaches the target group it's meant to?

**Summary of Lead Member's response:**

I do not have all of this information to hand but will write to you with a full response.

**7. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**7.1 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member please tell us how many people took part in the Council's participatory budget process?

**Response of the Lead Member:**

Below are a number of tables with the initial breakdown from all the events combined. Further detail is available upon request.

It should be noted that many of the people we registered did not provide equalities information either because they did not want to or because they registered themselves via e-mail or through an organisation. Despite our best efforts this makes some of the information incomplete.

Attendees: 815

Pre-registered: 540

Non pre-registered: 275

Note: A total of over 1,200 people registered to attend... What is captured above is those who both registered and attended.

Note 2: Some people who attended left before the voting. This was especially apparent at the event in LAP 2.

## Per LAP

LAP 1	91
LAP 2	105
LAP 3	95
LAP 4	100
LAP 5	83
LAP 6	99
LAP 7	137
LAP 8	105

## Ethnicity

Argentinian	1
Asian	
Bangladeshi	171
Asian Pakistani	2
Asian	
Vietnamese	1
Black	
Caribbean	1
Somali	15
White	
European	8
Irish	5
British White	70
North African	2
Other	2
No Comment	66
No	
response/not	
asked	470

## Religion

Agnostic	2
Atheist	2
Buddhist	2
Christian	57
Jewish	3
Muslim	187
None	21
Prefer not to say	43
Other	3
No response/not	
asked	495

Gender	
Female	134
Male	206
No reponse/not asked	475

Sexuality	
Bisexual	3
Gay man/woman	6
Heterosexual	257
Prefer not to say	64

Disabled?	
Disabled	19
Not Disabled	227
Prefer not to say	22
No response/not asked	547

Age	
12-19	84
20-25	26
26-34	58
35-43	61
44-52	46
53-59	22
60-64	13
65+	36
No response/Not asked	469

At this point, Councillor Tim Archer under Rule 15.13 made a personal explanation about attendance at his LAP meeting.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Shiria Khatun:**

I am glad that Councillor Ahmed has pointed out that LAP 7 had the highest number of people that attended the finance session.

Sometimes LAP meetings lack attendance by young people and women. Could he tell me how many young people and women attended this session?

**Summary of Lead Members' response:**

Overall at least 171 Bengali residents attended the sessions along with 70 white British residents and 75 Somalians. I do not have the full figures with me for the LAP 7 session or how many young people and women attended but I will provide these.

**7.2 Question from Councillor Tim Archer to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

Can the Lead Member provide details of the current performance of Tower Hamlets Homes and the RSLs in plural in the Borough at managing void periods?

**Response of the Lead Member:**

Void periods are measured through internal performance indicators such as BVPI 68 - Average time taken to re-let property.

This forms part of Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) monthly PI report to the council.

A table sent to the Member shows the current target and direction of travel.

THH have not met their target, reporting some disruption brought about by their going live mid 2008, July results were 44.06 days and August 40.36 days.

There was also a further lengthy period in January 2009 40.45 days.

However, THH have introduced a new void management process that is already showing improvement in the service.

The figure in February was 20 days and that in March was 23 days.

Clearly, the direction of travel is positive.

Across the year, the average was around 32 days against a target of 28 days.

I am confident that THH will meet its target on Void turnarounds for 2009/10.

At the moment, local RSLs generally perform better than THH on Void turnarounds.

In my written response to this question I will table a full breakdown of RSL performance against this indicator in the past 12 months.

But for information, Tower Hamlets Community Housing, East End Homes, Poplar HARCA and Swan Housing all tend to turn around voids within three weeks.

We pay tribute to those organisations on this success in this respect and recognise that this is as a result of both their strong leadership and a culture of consistent and effective performance management - something that THH is now beginning to emulate.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Tim Archer:**

Can I draw the Lead Member's attention to a 3 bedroom family property under East End Homes that has been vacant since 2006. There are many more examples. Does the Lead Member consider that this is evidence of success?

**Summary of Lead Members' reply:**

If this had been drawn to my attention before this evening, East End Homes could have been contacted and asked about the case. Of more general concern is the fact that the Mayor of London is sitting on hundreds of millions of pounds of funding that should be released to Tower Hamlets and other boroughs for social housing.

Councillor Tim Archer, under Rule 15.13, gave a personal explanation about the vacant properties and the action he had taken.

**7.3 Question from Councillor Abjol Miah to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Would the Lead Member confirm that there has been a change of policy and enforcement strategy with regard to businesses operating in Brick Lane and the area adjacent to Brick Lane on the Bethnal Green Road, and would he confirm what these changes involve and would he agree with me that the Brick Lane area is a vibrant and economically vital part of Tower Hamlets and that the attempts to shut businesses earlier than they have been licensed to open, under planning laws, is likely to have a disastrous effect on businesses and may lead to closures and would he agree that the decision to require restaurants, bars and pubs to remove street furniture either completely or unless they pay exorbitant charges is again adversely affecting the atmosphere and business prospects in the area and would he agree that, although residents concerns must be taken into account, residents moving into Brick Lane and its immediate vicinity ought to be made aware that this area has a vibrant late night-life and would he also agree with me that it is a matter of concern that council officers,



apparently seeking to clamp down on technical breaches of planning law, etc, have taken what business people in the area regard as an overly aggressive attitude that has caused considerable anger in the business community?

**Response of the Lead Member:**

The reason it has been necessary to take planning enforcement action is because a number of businesses within the Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road area are in breach of their planning permissions and in particular in relation to conditions concerning their operating hours. In order to stay within the constraints of their planning permission, businesses need to adhere to the conditions set out in their permission.

1. Planning and Enforcement Policies in Brick Lane

I can confirm that there have been no changes to the Council's Planning and Enforcement policies in this area. The Council has set planning policies regarding operating hours of bars and restaurants in Brick Lane. These policies are in place to safeguard resident's amenity. I note in particular the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Brick Lane Restaurant and Retail uses. One of the principle objectives of the SPG is to achieve a balance between protecting local residents from noise and disturbance from restaurants and associated uses, whilst encouraging regeneration.

The Council planning policy does not permit the bars and restaurant on Brick Lane to open beyond 1:00am as the area is of a mixed use with a large adjacent residential population. Night time activities need to be balanced with the needs of residents to have a period of peace and quiet and hence the 1:00am restriction. The Council has received several complaints going back a number of years from residents in the Brick Lane area regarding noise and disturbance, and this is part of a concerted effort to ensure that many of the bars and restaurants operate within their approved hours. The Council has taken enforcement action as a result of these complaints against a number of businesses within Brick Lane.

We accept that Brick Lane performs an important function in supporting a thriving night time economy. However, this should not be at the expense of the local residents' right to reasonable living conditions. The breaches of opening hours are serious, and are more than just "technical breaches", as unregulated late night uses have a significant detrimental impact on the quality of life of the local residents. There has to be a balance struck between the needs of residents who reasonably expect a level of "quiet" late into the evening and businesses operating late into the night. Many of the residents are long standing and have not moved into the area. Also, failure to take action recently where such action is a statutory duty would leave the Council exposed to an Ombudsman complaint and possible legal action. The Council's position on this has been supported by the Secretary of State on a number of appeals in and

around the Brick Lane area against the Council's decision to refuse later opening hours.

## 2. Street Furniture

In order for businesses to place furniture on the public highway they are required by law to apply for street licensing and planning permission. Charges for street licensing and planning permission are in accordance with neighbouring boroughs and national legislation.

## 3. Council Officers

I would like to stress that the Council's Enforcement Officers adhere to Tower Hamlets Council's customer service promises and always act in a professional and courteous manner at all times. We have recently improved our enforcement team growing it by 50% and are now able to tackle problem areas such as illegal hoardings and unauthorised clubs. This is beginning to have an effect on the ground in ensuring that planning decisions are adhered to and this is considered to be a proactive approach rather than an "aggressive" stance.

### **Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Abjol Miah:**

Would you agree with me that the local business representatives are very upset with this and would you come down to Brick Lane and provide the information you have just given to them face to face?

### **Summary of Lead Members' response:**

I regularly visit Brick Lane and know the area well. The Council has taken many measures to help local businesses including introducing free parking at Brick Lane to assist shop owners and market traders with attracting custom.

#### **7.4 Question from Councillor Tim O'Flaherty to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Can the Lead Member confirm that Bethnal Green is a safe place to walk, after the incident involving a Councillor in Derbyshire St, because Elected Members have the obligation of representing Ward matters whenever they occur, regardless of the time of day?

### **Response of the Lead Member:**

As Lead Member for Cleaner Safer Greener I would like to express my sincere regret over this appalling incident. I visited the member the next day and Councillor Eaton had made contact with me to ask that I did all that I could. I understand that the police are currently investigating this case and therefore they cannot divulge any details of the investigation at this time.

To ensure the safety of all people walking through Bethnal Green the local SNT have increased their patrols of the area and the CCTV control centre are vigilantly monitoring the area through the local cameras. The community safety services are keeping close contact with the police throughout the investigation and are endeavouring to assist with the identification of the perpetrators to bring them to justice.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Tim O’Flaherty:**

Bethnal Green is not the only place where people do not feel safe. Residents do not believe what the Lead Member has said about reducing crime in the borough as they do not feel safe in their homes and on the street. What actions have you taken on the high turnover of Safer Neighbourhood Officers in Bethnal Green?

**Summary of Lead Members’ response:**

Enhanced safety and the confidence of local residents in this regard is a key priority for the Council. Indeed, we have secured twenty new police officers to address these issues. Figures released yesterday showed an 18% reduction in London crime overall with 17% of this from within Tower Hamlets. The Council will however not become complacent and more will be done such as THEOs and extended CCTV and wifi. I will be happy to show Members where the new cameras will be located.

**7.5 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed to the Lead Member for Children’s Services, Councillor Clair Hawkins**

Could the Lead Member provide us with figures that show how much it would cost to send looked-after children to boarding school rather than having the Council care for them?

**Response**

In arranging placements and schooling for our looked-after children their individual needs must come first. Whenever possible, children are placed with families and in schools within the borough. Where however there is a need for a specialist school placement fees can range from approximately £90,000 to £200,000 a year depending on the needs of the child. The placements are all carefully considered to ensure the needs of the children, which can be extremely complex, are met and are agreed following presentation to the Joint Commissioning Panel, which is made up from representatives from, Children's Social Care, Special Educational Needs (SEN) section, Children Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and child psychology service.

No supplementary question was asked.

## **7.6 Question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Clair Hawkins**

In light of the recent planning meeting to allow a fried chicken outlet to be set up within 500m of 6 schools, a mixture of primary and secondary, can the Lead Member clarify the Council position on healthy eating and show how this is being translated into policies that are being implemented to improve the health of children of the Borough?

### **Response of the Lead Member:**

Planning has a limited control in restricting particular types of hot food take-way (A5) uses in any particular location. However, there are a number of controls currently in place, such as protecting amenity and limiting nuisance. These controls ensure that these types of uses limit the impact on the wider environment.

In addition there are a number of other initiatives in place to improve the health of children in the borough. These include:

- 1) promoting health eating for children through a comprehensive education programme lead by Children's Services;

The Health through Education team work with schools in the authority to address issues of school policy and practice around the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity amongst children and young people. All schools are involved in the Healthy Schools programme, which includes Healthy Eating and Physical Activity as one of its four strands, and 72% (62) of our schools have achieved National Healthy School Status (NHSS). A further 5 schools will be accredited for their work in this area within this next month leaving us well placed to exceed the national target of 75% (69) of schools with NHSS by December 2009.

To support schools with this work, the Health through Education team is currently drafting local authority guidance on both Healthy Eating and Physical Activity which is due to be launched by July 2009. The guidance will cover school policy issues as well as practical help with resources and best practice ideas.

Schools also access specialist children's public health support from the Community Dietitian team within Barts and the London NHS Trust.

Extended Services work closely with the Primary Care Trust on the promotion of healthy eating through the Healthy Weight Healthy Lives strategy. Through this partnership 35 schools have received funding and advisory support to extend and quality assure breakfast club and out of school hour learning provision which promotes healthy eating and physical activity. To date in the current school year some 1288 children and young people and 53 parents and carers have benefited from this

additional provision. Schools have also been encouraged to actively involve their children and young people in the promotion of healthy eating within their school community through student-led projects. Through this scheme, pupils from 24 schools will be championing a range of projects, from healthy tuck shops to a photography/sculpture project utilising fruits and vegetable.

2) considering possible restrictions on this type of activity within Council owned premises in proximity to schools.

3) Tackling childhood obesity is one of the priorities in our Local Area Agreement and new three year Children and Young People's Plan. We have also attracted significant additional funding to implement our 'Healthy Borough' programme with the PCT. The additional government funding of £4.68 million is matched by local funding of over £5 million for the period December 2008 to March 2011.

The 'Healthy Borough' programme includes actions to improve healthy eating amongst our children, young people and families such as:

- Encouraging fast-food outlets to offer healthier choices through a Food for Health Award scheme
- Improving education and information for children and their families on healthy eating through schools, children's centres and parenting programmes
- Working with schools and pupils to increase the take up of school meals
- Exploring what regulatory levers are available that could be used to limit locations at which fast food outlets can open
- Expanding and building on our targeted and specialist provision to support children and families with identified weight management needs, including a new early intervention service for families where one or both parents is overweight or obese
- Increased opportunities for children, young people and their families for regular physical activity through Healthy Schools and community initiatives.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Ruper Eckhardt:**

Will the Council continue to approve fast food outlets despite having the fifth highest obesity levels among reception class children in London?

**Summary of Lead Members' response:**

The Council will continue to use its planning powers to the benefit of local people and the environment but a much wider range of levers are available, and will be used, to address this priority issue as I have described.

In accordance with Rule 12.10 (expiry of time limit), questions 7 – 24 were not put. Written responses would be forwarded to the questioners.

## **8. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**

### **8.1 Report of the Cabinet Meeting of 11th March 2009**

#### **Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12**

The meeting considered the report of the Cabinet meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009 in relation to the above item.

Councillor Clair Hawkins **MOVED** and Councillor Lutfur Rahman **SECONDED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Clair Hawkins, Lead Member for Children's Services introduced the report. She said that this Plan was more focused on working together, open and honest and looking at areas that needed improvement. It focused on child obesity, child poverty, engaging the community, sexual health needs, children with disabilities and general wellbeing.

Other Members commented on the report and welcomed the information and plan set out therein. After discussion, the recommendations were put to the meeting and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12 be approved as attached at appendix A to the report of the Cabinet; and
- (2) That the proposed name change of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Group (CYPSPG) to the Children and Families Trust be noted.

## **9. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

### **9.1 Joint Arrangements**

There was no business under this heading to be considered.

### **9.2 External Organisations**

There was no business under this heading to be considered.

## 10. OTHER BUSINESS

### 10.1 Programme of meetings 2009/10

Councillor Lutfur Rahman **MOVED** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **SECONDED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Lutfur Rahman noted that since 2006 the Council had increased the number of Council meetings annually by two, introducing a dedicated budget meeting and an additional ordinary meeting in March/April each year.

Councillor Stephanie Eaton thanked officers for their work in preparing the draft calendar, and the members of the public and representatives of partner organisations who attended the Council's meetings for their valued contribution.

On being put to the vote, it was

#### **RESOLVED**

That the proposed programme of meetings for the municipal year 2009/10 as set out in the appendix to the report be approved.

### 10.2 Review of the Constitution

Councillor Marc Francis **MOVED** and Councillor Lutfur Rahman **SECONDED** the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Francis outlined the proposed changes to be made to the Constitution.

Councillor Lutfur Rahman **MOVED** and Councillor Salim Ullah **SECONDED** an amendment to the recommendations as follows:-

"That the proposed changes to the Constitution as set out in the report be agreed, subject to the following amendments to the proposals in relation to the Scheme of Members' Allowances:-

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs):

That the SRA payable to the Leader of the Council be subject to a 25% reduction in 2009/2010.

That the indexation of allowances in line with the local government pay settlement be not applied to the SRAs for Cabinet Members in 2009/2010.

That the proposed SRA for the Council's representative to the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority be not implemented."

Councillor Rahman stated that the above amendment would result in a reduction of approximately £14,000 in the cost of the increased SRAs.

Following discussion the amendment was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The substantive recommendations as amended were then put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) That subject to (2) below, the amendments to the Council's Constitution, including the Scheme of Members' Allowances, be agreed as set out in the schedule attached to the report, to take effect from the Annual Council on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009.
- (2) That the proposed changes to the Scheme of Members' Allowances, as set out in the schedule be agreed with the following amendments:  
  
Special Responsibility Allowances:
  - (a) That the SRA payable to the Leader of the Council be subject to a 25% reduction in 2009/2010;
  - (b) That the indexation of allowances in line with the local government pay settlement be not applied to the SRAs for Cabinet Members in 2009/2010; and
  - (c) That the proposed SRA for the Council's representative to the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority be not implemented.
- (3) That the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) be authorised to make detailed drafting changes to the Constitution as necessary to put into effect the agreed amendments.

### **11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor Abjol Miah **MOVED** and Councillor Stephanie Eaton **SECONDED** – “That under Rule 14.1.13 the meeting be extended for a further half an hour as provided for in Rule 9.”

On being put to the vote, the procedural motion was **defeated**.

#### **Change to order of business**

Councillor Fozol Miah **MOVED** and Councillor Joshua Peck **SECONDED** – “That under Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be changed to allow motion 11.11 to be considered as the next item of business”

On being put to the vote, the procedural motion was **agreed**.



**11.11 Motion submitted by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding Bow Gurdwara fire**

The motion as printed in the agenda was moved by Councillor Fozol Miah and seconded by Councillor Abjol Miah.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **MOVED** and Councillor Lutfur Rahman **SECONDED** an amendment as follows:-

“Add to the end of the original motion –

‘This Council resolves to continue to offer whatever support is possible to the congregation of the Bow Gurdwara in finding alternative venues until such time as the permanent replacement can be found/constructed; and

This Council resolves to do whatever it can to help in the reconstruction of the building or the conversion of an alternative site.’”

The amendment was **accepted** by the mover and seconder of the original motion who, with the consent of the meeting, altered their motion accordingly.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was

**RESOLVED**

This Council notes

- a) the terrible fire which destroyed the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat, Harley Grove, Bow on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009
- b) the anguish, upset and anger this has caused in the Sikh community
- c) the efforts of Council officers to ensure that facilities are found for the members of the Gurdwara to continue their worship
- d) that the Police are giving the investigation of the causes of the fire and the identification of any perpetrator a very high priority
- e) that the concerns for and sympathy with the Bow Gurdwara members and the Sikh Community extends across people of all faiths and none in Tower Hamlets

This Council urges

- a) anyone who knows anything about the fire to contact the police and to co-operate fully in their investigation

b) the police and other authorities including the Council to continue to give this issue a very high priority and to provide all the help and support they can to the members of the Bow Gurdwara

This Council expresses the utmost sympathy and solidarity with the members of the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat and the wider Sikh community for this terrible fire which has destroyed a holy place revered across all faith communities and residents of Tower Hamlets.

This Council resolves to continue to offer whatever support is possible to the congregation of the Bow Gurdwara in finding alternative venues until such time as the permanent replacement can be found/constructed.

This Council resolves to do whatever it can to help in the reconstruction of the building or the conversion of an alternative site.

### **Change to order of business**

Councillor Abjol Mial **MOVED** and Councillor Dulal Uddin **SECONDED** "That under Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be changed to allow motion 11.4 to be considered as the next item."

On being put to the vote, the procedural motion was **agreed**.

### **11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding control over sex encounter venues**

The motion as printed in the agenda was moved by Councillor Abjol Miah and seconded by Councillor Harun Miah.

Councillor Rachael Saunders **MOVED** and Councillor Rania Khan **SECONDED**, an amendment as follows:-

"Delete all and insert:-

'That this Council recognizes that the government has responded to the campaign led by Object and supported by Tower Hamlets to tighten up regulation on strip clubs, but is concerned that loopholes are being written into legislation.

Two issues are:

1. Venues providing lap dancing less than once per month will be exempt from the legislation. This will create a loophole for a growing number of venues that fall precisely into that category.
2. The legislation is adoptive. The result will be local residents face a postcode lottery over whether they have a say in lap dancing

club license applications. While London local authorities are clearly leading the way in terms of working to gain greater control over lap dancing clubs, not all local authorities in England and Wales are similarly concerned and may choose not to adopt the legislation. In which case local people in those areas would continue to be denied a voice, and there would be an uneven licensing regime.

This Council supports the Fawcett Society and Object campaign to close these loopholes, and resolves to write to the Secretary of State accordingly.

This Council also resolves to provide more educational programmes to raise awareness of the impact of the objectification of women on young girl's self-esteem, body image and sexual bullying.”

The amendment was **accepted** by the mover and seconder of the original motion who, with the consent of the meeting, altered their motion accordingly.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was

### **RESOLVED**

This Council recognizes that the government has responded to the campaign led by Object and supported by Tower Hamlets to tighten up regulation on strip clubs, but is concerned that loopholes are being written into legislation.

Two issues are:

1. Venues providing lap dancing less than once per month will be exempt from the legislation. This will create a loophole for a growing number of venues that fall precisely into that category.
2. The legislation is adoptive. The result will be local residents face a postcode lottery over whether they have a say in lap dancing club license applications. While London local authorities are clearly leading the way in terms of working to gain greater control over lap dancing clubs, not all local authorities in England and Wales are similarly concerned and may choose not to adopt the legislation. In which case local people in those areas would continue to be denied a voice, and there would be an uneven licensing regime.

This Council supports the Fawcett Society and Object campaign to close these loopholes, and resolves to write to the Secretary of State accordingly.

This Council also resolves to provide more educational programmes to raise awareness of the impact of the objectification of women on young girl's self-esteem, body image and sexual bullying.

### **Urgent Motion**

Councillor Tim Archer **MOVED** and Councillor Ahmed Hussain **SECONDED** that Rule 13.2 be suspended to allow a motion on Towing Company ELV and a recent incident on Rainhill Way to be put as a matter of urgency.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

The Mayor then closed the meeting in accordance with Rule 9 (duration of meeting). Motions 11.1 – 11.3, 11.5 – 11.10 and 11.12 – 11.15 as listed below were not considered due to lack of time:-

- 11.1 Motion submitted by Councillor Tim Archer regarding local bin taxes/Waste Incentive Pilot Schemes**
- 11.2 Motion submitted by Councillor Lutfur Rahman regarding the Bethnal Green Tube Disaster Memorial**
- 11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding future provision of a Multi-Faith burial ground**
- 11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Peter Golds regarding lighting in Brickfield Gardens**
- 11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Marc Francis regarding Strangers into Citizens campaign**
- 11.7 Motion submitted by Councillor Tim O'Flaherty regarding eliminating excessive punishment for minor parking offences**
- 11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding market charges and parking**
- 11.9 Motion submitted by Councillor Ahmed Hussain regarding local pharmacies throughout the borough**
- 11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Alex Heslop regarding support for the co-operative and social enterprise sector**
- 11.12 Motion submitted by Councillor Sirajul Islam regarding condemning homophobia and prejudice**
- 11.13 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding proliferation of Tesco's**

**11.14 Motion submitted by Councillor Abdul Munim regarding housing crisis**

**11.15 Motion submitted by Councillor Mamun Rashid regarding support for Lifelong Learning**

The meeting ended at 10.55 p.m.

The Mayor,  
Chair, Council