



Meeting of the

TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL

Wednesday, 14 October 2009 at 7.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

VENUE

Council Chamber, 1st Floor,
Town Hall, Mulberry Place,
5 Clove Crescent,
London E14 2BG

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact:

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**TO THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER
HAMLETS**

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to be held in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG** at **7.30 p.m.** on **WEDNESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2009**

Kevan Collins
Interim Chief Executive

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2009

7.30 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992. See attached note from the Chief Executive.

3. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 15th July 2009.

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

5. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS OR DEPUTATIONS

The petitions and deputations that have been received for presentation to the meeting are set out in agenda item 5 attached.

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

No questions have been received from members of the public for submission to this meeting.

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

29 - 36

(Maximum of 30 minutes allowed)

The questions which have been received are set out in agenda item 7.

- 8. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**
- 8 .1 Appointment of Head of Paid Service 37 - 38**
- Report of the Assistant Chief Executive attached – recommendation of the Appointments Sub-Committee to be tabled.
- 8 .2 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 39 - 58**
- The Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2008-09 is attached.
- 9. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)**
- There is no business to conduct under this agenda item.
- 10. OTHER BUSINESS (IF ANY)**
- There is no business to conduct under this agenda item.
- 11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 59 - 72**
- The motions submitted by Members for debate at this meeting are attached at agenda item 11.

Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This note is guidance only. Members should consult the Council's Code of Conduct for further details. Note: Only Members can decide if they have an interest therefore they must make their own decision. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending at a meeting.

Declaration of interests for Members

Where Members have a personal interest in any business of the authority as described in paragraph 4 of the Council's Code of Conduct (contained in part 5 of the Council's Constitution) then s/he must disclose this personal interest as in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Code. Members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting and certainly no later than the commencement of the item or where the interest becomes apparent.

You have a **personal interest** in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- (a) An interest that you must **register**
- (b) An interest that is not on the register, but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of your authority more than it would affect the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision.

Where a personal interest is declared a Member may stay and take part in the debate and decision on that item.

What constitutes a prejudicial interest? - Please refer to paragraph 6 of the adopted Code of Conduct.

Your personal interest will also be a prejudicial interest in a matter if (a), (b) and either (c) or (d) below apply:-

- (a) A member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think that your personal interests are so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment of the public interests; AND
- (b) The matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decision listed in paragraph 6.2 of the Code; AND EITHER
- (c) The matter affects your financial position or the financial interest of a body with which you are associated; or
- (d) The matter relates to the determination of a licensing or regulatory application

The key points to remember if you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting:-

- i. You must declare that you have a prejudicial interest, and the nature of that interest, as soon as that interest becomes apparent to you; and
- ii. You must leave the room for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision unless (iv) below applies; and

- iii. You must not seek to improperly influence a decision in which you have a prejudicial interest.
- iv. If Members of the public are allowed to speak or make representations at the meeting, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, by statutory right or otherwise (e.g. planning or licensing committees), you can declare your prejudicial interest but make representations. However, you must immediately leave the room once you have finished your representations and answered questions (if any). You cannot remain in the meeting or in the public gallery during the debate or decision on the matter.

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY 2009

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

Members Present:

Councillor Helal Abbas	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan
Councillor Rofique U Ahmed	Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor Anwara Ali	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Abdul Matin
Councillor M. Shahid Ali	Councillor Abjol Miah
Councillor Tim Archer	Councillor Fozol Miah
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Lutfa Begum	Councillor Abdul Munim
Councillor Philip Briscoe	Councillor Tim O'Flaherty
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Rupert Eckhardt	Councillor Lutfur Rahman
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor M. Mamun Rashid
Councillor Fazlul Haque	Councillor Muhammad Abdullah Salique
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	Councillor A A Sardar
Councillor Clair Hawkins	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Alexander Heslop	Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Shirley Houghton	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

The meeting opened at 7.35 p.m.

The Mayor, Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer, in the chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Carli Harper-Penman.

RESOLVED

That the apology be noted.

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	11.2	Personal	My employer currently funds London Citizens for the same campaign
Helal Abbas	11.9	Personal	Member of the Tower Hamlets Credit Union
Ohid Ahmed	8.1	Personal	St. Leonards Church in my Ward
Ohid Ahmed	10.2	Personal	Board member of London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
Ohid Ahmed	11.8	Personal	RSL (Harca) Leaseholder
Ohid Ahmed	11.10	Personal	Known to many residents of Robin Hood Gardens. Also part of the consultation and carried out personal research whilst Lead Member of Regeneration
Rajib Ahmed	5.1.1 and 11.4	Personal	College facility in my ward
Rofique U. Ahmed	8.2	Personal	ODA Planning Committee member
Rofique U. Ahmed	10.2	Personal	ODA Planning Committee member
Rofique U. Ahmed	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder of Council property
Rofique U. Ahmed	11.12	Personal	Board member of ODA Planning decisions Team
Mohammed Shahid Ali	11.10	Personal	Chair of the Robin Hood Gardens Tenants Association
Abdul Asad	8.2	Personal	Strategic Plan - Work for Youth Service Provider
Abdul Asad	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder
Abdul Asad	11.9	Personal	Member of Co-operative party
Alibor Choudhury	11.10	Personal	Board member on Tower Hamlets Homes
Stephanie Eaton	5.2.1	Personal	Ward Councillor
Fazlul Haque	5.1.1	Personal	Tower Hamlets College facilities in my ward – Bethnal Green Adult Education Centre
Fazlul Haque	8.1	Personal	Proposed zone in Weavers Ward

Fazlul Haque	11.4	Personal	Tower Hamlets College facilities in Weavers Ward
Fazlul Haque	11.8	Personal	Council Leaseholder
Shafiqul Haque	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder
Shafiqul Haque	11.10	Personal	Ward Councillor
Alex Heslop	11.9	Personal	Member of the Co-operative party, Tower Hamlets Community Credit Union and Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency
Alex Heslop	11.10	Personal	Board member of Tower Hamlets Homes who have an interest in Robin Hood Gardens
Fazlul Haque	11.10	Personal	Board Member of Tower Hamlets Homes
Clair Hawkins	5.1.1	Personal	Member of UCU
Clair Hawkins	11.4	Personal	Member of UCU
Waiseul Islam	10.2	Personal	Olympic Ambassador for LBTH
Denise Jones	11.10	Personal	Council Board member for Tower Hamlets Homes
Azizur Rahman Khan	5.2.1	Personal	Ward Councillor
Azizur Rahman Khan	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder
Rania Khan	11.4	Prejudicial	IEB Member for Saint Paul's Way School
Shiria Khatun	5.1.1 and 11.4	Personal	College offers facilities in my ward
Abdul Matin	8.1	Personal	Ward Councillor
Harun Miah	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder
Tim O'Flaherty	8.1	Personal	Ward Councillor
Ahmed Omer	11.8	Personal	Resident of RSL
Joshua Peck	11.12	Personal	Employer has a contract with Crossrail
Oliur Rahman	5.1.1	Personal	Tower Hamlets College in my ward and I have been supporting the group in campaigning against the cuts
Oliur Rahman	5.2.3	Personal	Perfect Fried Chicken and Halley Primary School are in my ward
Oliur Rahman	11.4	Personal	Tower Hamlets College is in my ward
Oliur Rahman	11.8	Personal	RSL Tenant (Toynbee)
Oliur Rahman	11.12	Personal	I have been opposing Crossrail and supported the campaign group

Muhammad Abdullah Salique	5.2.1	Personal	Community Centre in my ward of Bethnal Green North
Muhammad Abdullah Salique	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder
A. A. Sardar	11.4	Personal	Facility in my ward
A. A. Sardar	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder and Board Member
Rachael Saunders	11.4	Personal	St. Paul's Way School is in my ward
Bill Turner	5.2.3	Personal	I have spoken at a number of different forums against the licensing of fried chicken outlets
Bill Turner	11.9	Personal	Member of the Co-operative party
Dulal Uddin	11.10	Personal	Have an interest in Robin Hood Gardens
Abdal Ullah	5.1.1	Prejudicial	Governor for Tower Hamlets College
Abdal Ullah	5.2.3	Personal	Restaurant is in my ward
Abdal Ullah	5.2.4	Personal	Royal London Hospital
Abdal Ullah	11.4	Personal	Tower Hamlets College Facility is in my ward – Arbour Square
Abdal Ullah	11.8	Personal	Council leaseholder
Salim Ullah	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder
Motin Uz-Zaman	5.2.4	Personal	I work for Royal London Hospital
Motin Uz-Zaman	11.8	Personal	Leaseholder

3. MINUTES

Councillor Stephanie Eaton asked for clarification of the Councillor membership of the Permanent Placements Panel as the appendix to the minutes stated that it had to be a member of the Cabinet. The Service Head, Democratic Services clarified that the Councillor appointed to the Permanent Placements Panel was not in fact required to be a member of the Cabinet and the Council's Constitution had been amended accordingly in May 2009.

RESOLVED

That subject to the above clarification, the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 20th May 2009 be confirmed as a correct record 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

Chief Executive's resignation

The Mayor stated that he had received a request from Councillor Archer and other Councillors for an Extraordinary Council Meeting to discuss the resignation of the Chief Executive. Due to the proximity of the current meeting the Mayor did not consider it a good use of resources to call an additional meeting. However, recognising the interest of Members in this matter the Mayor would invite the Leader of the Council to make a statement and would then allow a brief period for questions from each of the Group Leaders.

The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that information relating to any individual or which was likely to reveal the identity of any individual, or that relates to the financial affairs of any particular person, or to any negotiations in connection with labour relations matters between the Council and its employees is by law exempt information and the public may be excluded from the meeting if it is likely that exempt information will be disclosed.

All Councillors were bound by the Code of Conduct not to disclose confidential information. The fact that information given in confidence may have been improperly made public does not mean that it can be repeated in public. Confidential information may not be disclosed.

The Leader of the Council then made an announcement regarding the recent resignation of the Chief Executive. He stated that Members were now aware that the Council and the Chief Executive had come to a mutual agreement for the Chief Executive to leave his post.

The Chief Executive had worked with great dedication, commitment and integrity during his time at Tower Hamlets and had championed the Council's core values of achieving results; valuing diversity; engaging with others; and learning effectively. However, Tower Hamlets was always changing and the communities of the borough and the future challenges and direction of the organisation now required a fresh approach to accelerate the improvements and deliver the Council's priorities around housing, education, tackling worklessness and creating a safer and cleaner borough for all. The Leader and the Chief Executive had therefore decided together that now was an appropriate time for him to move on from the organisation.

At the invitation of the Mayor the respective opposition group leaders then each put a question and a supplementary question on this matter to the Leader of the Council.

5. TO RECEIVE ANY DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS

DEPUTATIONS

5.1.1 Deputation re: Opposing cuts at Tower Hamlets College

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mr. Roberto Foth addressed the meeting in support of the deputation and re-iterated the negative impact the cuts would have on the community.

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

Councillor Abdul Asad, Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families responded to the matters raised by Mr. Foth. He said the cuts had resulted from a shift in funding from the Learning and Skills Council so there was now limited funding across the board for Entry Level ESOL. However the Council and the College were continuing to discuss ESOL provision, which remained a priority for the borough, and work was continuing at the Joint Providers Forum and the Borough Employment Strategy Group.

Councillor Tim Archer **MOVED** and Councillor Peter Golds **SECONDED** "That under Rule 14.1.3, the order of business on the agenda be changed to allow the following emergency motion to be considered:-

'That this Council resolves to take funds from reserves to ensure continuity of ESOL classes at Tower Hamlets College.'

At this point more than ten Members rose to request a recorded vote.

The Service Head, Democratic Services re-read the procedural motion, which was then put and votes recorded as follows:

For:

- Councillor Peter Golds
- Councillor Abjol Miah
- Councillor Stephanie Eaton
- Councillor Helal Abbas
- Councillor Shahed Ali
- Councillor Tim Archer
- Councillor Philip Briscoe
- Councillor Rupert Eckhardt
- Councillor Alex Heslop
- Councillor Shirley Houghton
- Councillor Ahmed Hussain
- Councillor Denise Jones
- Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
- Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan
- Councillor Shiria Khatun
- Councillor Abdul Matin
- Councillor Fozol Miah
- Councillor Harun Miah
- Councillor Mohammed Abdul Munim

Councillor Timothy O'Flaherty
Councillor Mohammed Mamun Rashid
Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Dulal Uddin

Against: Councillor Lutfur Rahman
Councillor Ohid Ahmed
Councillor Rajib Ahmed
Councillor Rofique Uddin Ahmed
Councillor Dr. Anwara Ali
Councillor Mohammed Shahid Ali
Councillor Abdul Asad
Councillor Lutfu Begum
Councillor Alibor Choudhury
Councillor Marc Francis
Councillor Fazlul Haque
Councillor Shafiqul Haque
Councillor Clair Hawkins
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Waiseul Islam
Councillor Ann Jackson
Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Muhammad Abdullah Salique
Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Salim Ullah
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Councillor Ahmed Omer (The Mayor)

Abstention: Councillor Abdul Aziz Sardar

The procedural motion was therefore **DEFEATED** by 23 votes for, 26 votes against and 1 absention.

Councillor Abjol Miah the **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 of business."

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **DEFEATED**, with 18 votes for and 31 against.

Councillor Bill Turner then **MOVED** and Councillor Ann Jackson **SECONDED** "that under Rule 14.1.4 the deputation be also referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration." On being put to the vote, the motion was **AGREED** with no Member voting against.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the deputation be referred to the Corporate Director, Children, Schools and Families for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days; and
- (2) That the deputation be also referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

PETITIONS**5.2.1 Petition re: Glasshouse Community Centre**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Johanna Kaschke addressed the meeting in support of the petition. Ms Kaschke informed Members that the petition had 161 signatures and read out the amended wording of the petition as circulated to Councillors.

Ms. Kaschke responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Rania Khan, Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships responded to the matters raised by Ms. Kaschke. Councillor Khan stated that the process for allocating mainstream grants to community organisations had changed in 2008/09 to make it more transparent. The Glasshouse Community Centre was contacted on a number of occasions between July and December 2008 to notify them of the changes, but did not submit an application before the deadline of 19th December 2008. Accepting a late application would have been unfair on those organisations that did apply on time and had funding allocated.

Councillor Khan was very sorry to hear of Jackie Miller's bereavement and understood that the Glasshouse Community Centre was now unfortunately in a difficult position. The Council had helped the Centre to look at other funding opportunities and would continue to do so. Councillor Khan also offered to meet with Ms. Kaschke in this regard.

RESOLVED

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

5.2.2 Petition re: Stebondale Street

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mrs. Gloria Thienel addressed the meeting in support of the petition. Mrs Thienel outlined a number of meetings she had attended and officers she had spoken to about getting the repairs undertaken.

Mrs. Thienel responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener thanked Mrs. Thienel for bringing the petition to the Council and said that no Councillors from the Isle of Dogs had approached him about the issues that had been raised. He said that the Council was currently preparing a scheme to repair the worst section of Stebondale Street, around the width restriction, within the next two months.

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: the re-opening of the Perfect Fried Chicken at Ben Jonson Road and Aston Street, E1

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Newarun Nessa addressed the meeting in support of the petition and urged the Council to prevent the re-opening of the fried chicken shop in this location.

Ms. Nessa responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener thanked Ms. Nessa for bringing the petition to the meeting and said that the Council was very concerned about obesity amongst young people in the borough and was pursuing a range of initiatives with health service partners to promote more active lifestyles and healthier food choices. The Council does not have powers to prevent fast food premises from trading but where additional litter or anti-social behaviour is a problem this would be addressed by the appropriate Council and Police officers.

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.

5.2.4 Petition re: the closure of the pedestrian crossing outside the Royal London Hospital

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mr. Akkar Miah addressed the meeting in support of the petition. He stated that some traders had experienced 50 – 70% loss of earnings since the pedestrian crossing had been closed and that people could not get to some of the stalls because there were no gaps to use as walk throughs. There was also no emergency access or access for delivering goods.

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

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener responded to the matters raised by Mr. Miah and said that the previous crossing suffered from pedestrian congestion with difficult access from the north due to obstructions created by the market operations. It had generated many complaints from the public over a number of years. As part of the ongoing improvement works for the market, the Council worked closely with Transport for London to move the crossing to a more suitable location. The new crossing was now open and was wider than the previous facility and provided a more direct link between the hospital entrance and the underground station.

A further crossing facility may be introduced when the Crossrail station opens in the future but at this stage there were no plans to introduce another crossing in this location.

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.

At this point (9.13pm) the Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow those Members who needed to observe prayers to do so.

The meeting resumed at 9.28pm.

5.2.5 Petition re: the noise level of the new public address system at All Saints DLR station

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Lee Tiff addressed the meeting in support of the petition. Ms Tiff reiterated the points made in the written submission and also asked what would be done to protect residents from the excessive construction noise that on occasion continued throughout the night in this location.

Ms. Tiff responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener sympathised with the matters raised by Ms. Tiff and said that he would ensure that these issues were addressed at his next meeting with DLR representatives, to which Councillor David Snowdon may wish to accompany him. Councillor Ullah added that he welcomed the investment that the DLR was making in the area but it was essential that the interests of residents were protected.

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.

Councillor Peter Golds then **MOVED** and Councillor Tim Archer **SECONDED** “that under Rule 14.1.3, the order of business on the agenda be changed to bring forward motion 11.13 in the names of Councillor Munim and Councillor Abjol Miah for immediate discussion.”

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **DEFEATED**, with 8 votes for and 31 against.

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

6.1 Question from Mr. Terry McGreenera to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis

“In the light of the statement made by the Prime Minister earlier in the year about a return to council housing and the measures announced in the Budget, does the Lead Member for Housing regret the policies that this Council has pursued over the past decade and the trouble, grief and human and financial cost that it has caused to people in Tower Hamlets?”

Response by the Lead Member

The Council always welcomes any positive changes in Government housing policy.

Changes like the former Housing Minister’s direct intervention earlier this year to keep the rent increase for council tenants to an absolute minimum.

Something on which none of the parties opposite, or indeed the Green Party Mr McGreenera represents, had anything whatsoever to say.

Tower Hamlets continues to produce the largest number of new housing of any London borough.

1,000 social rented and intermediate properties in each of the past three years.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) play a central role in helping Tower Hamlets to achieve this level of housing development which directly benefits the boroughs many homeless and overcrowded households.

That said, LBTH is carrying out a root and branch review of affordable housing providers operating within the borough.

We anticipate adopting a more vigorous framework of engagement through the selection of preferred partners.

The last ten years have brought a number of successes through the Housing Choice programme (Large Scale Voluntary Transfers) -

- Active involvement of residents and tenants in the delivery of housing services and investments.
- **2426 (60%)** out of the 4077 non decent homes transferred to RSL from LBTH, have now been made decent.
- **£434.98 million** of additional investment has been secured for works
- **£145.4 million** of that additional funding having been now released for capital improvement of retained stock.

As Mr McGreenera knows – because he opposed this too – the council has more recently established an Arms Length Management Organisation - Tower Hamlets Homes.

This ALMO is designed to improve the quality of management of our remaining council housing and hopefully secure the funding necessary to bring those homes up to a Decent Standard too.

Finally, I can tell Mr McGreenera and colleagues in this Council Chamber that LBTH will be submitting an expression of interest to Government to try to secure some of the funding available to build NEW council housing.

This scheme would require us to match fund any investment we secure from Government, but Labour councillors are determined to explore every option to help solve the housing crisis facing our constituents.

Summary of supplementary question from Mr. McGreenera:

Why has it taken 12 years for the Government to reverse this damaging policy?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

The Council is absolutely committed to addressing the needs of the people on the waiting list and will go beyond the measures already announced. Tower Hamlets will be making a bid for new council housing including match funding from the Council and the Government. This would be a long term project but the Council was determined to deliver as quickly as possible.

6.2 Question from Mr. Barry Blandford to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis

“Jubilee Crescent is a Sheltered Housing Scheme located at 327 to 355A Manchester Road in the Blackwall and Cubitt Ward, Post Code E14 3HN. It consists of 4 x 6 bedroom flats, 3 on the ground floor, 3 on

the first floor and 1 x 3 flats on the first floor, with the ground floor as a 3 bedroom flat (for Manager) plus an office and Day/Club room.

Recently a meeting was held with the residents and a general manager on the future and we were told that it was being taken out of Sheltered as there was no lift or wheel chair access. The Residents that moved into the Crescent over the years took up residency as it was designated Sheltered.

It seems that yet again the council is taking the stance that we older people do not matter. We had no information, no consultation and the matter was dealt with at a Cabinet meeting behind closed doors.

We also have received a letter from the planning department on a scheme to replace the windows from Crittal to PVC with new doors, afterwards we had a meeting with the general manager on this proposal, and since the application was turned down and a new one submitted which we were told has been agreed, once again we have not been consulted.

We also have discovered through an advert in East End Life that the 3 bedroom flat has been advertised for a couple with a carer over 60 or brother and sister. This has annoyed the residents as we were hoping it to be converted to a one bedroom flat a sleep-in room for a relative a complete office with own toilet and extension of clubroom plus another toilet to bring it up to health and safety regulation.

We have been wondering whether or not any of the cabinet members have ever visited the Crescent and seen what a grand site one that was built for retirement home for the Dockers in 1935 in the year of the Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary and refurbished by the LDDC in 1985 and opened by Mrs. Jo Benson OBE JP Housing Corporation Board Member.

I, on this occasion would on behalf of the residents request that we are visited by a member of the Cabinet, a planning officer and a ward councillor and to be listened to the queries of the older people?"

Response by the Lead Member:

A Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing which reported in June 2006 identified of a number of Sheltered schemes that do not have lift access and therefore under good practice guidelines are not suitable for sheltered accommodation.

Cabinet endorsed the recommendations of the best value review.

Jubilee Court was identified in the initial service review as not being suitable for service users with mobility needs and Supporting People Contract Monitoring Meetings with Southern Housing Group as far back as 2007 have identified this issue.

They were reminded in November 2008 that SP funding would be withdrawn from March 2010 if solutions were not found.

It was following a further meeting in May 2009 that Southern held the meeting with residents.

Southern have been asked to provide the Council with a report on their plans for Jubilee Crescent.

They have now asked that the withdrawal of Supporting People funding is deferred for a year to allow them more time to find solutions.

I have personally been in touch with Tom Dacey the Chief Executive of Southern Housing to stress that the Council is prepared to consider this request, providing we get a firm assurance that this matter will be resolved within that period.

I am happy to meet with residents of Jubilee Court to explain the situation and listen to their concerns in detail.

Planning Application

An application for the replacement of existing "crittall" windows with white UPVC double glazing was refused on 2nd December 2008.

Officers felt that the proposed UPVC windows would have failed to respect the special character of the properties within Jubilee Crescent and would have detracted from the character and appearance of the street scene.

Subsequently, an alternative application to replace was submitted which was approved on 5th June 2009 for

- All original crittall windows with white glass fibre reinforced setting polymer (poltec)
- The front and rear entrance doors multisecure' high security doors.

82 letters were sent to adjacent residents about this application. 1 petition with 11 signatures was received by the Council supporting this application.

Summary of supplementary question from Mr. Blandford:

Would you be willing to come and meet the residents at the Crescent?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

Yes, I will be happy to come along and meet the residents. I endorse the work that Barry Blandford and the Council's officers have done, and I believe the changes to the scheme have shown that the Council is willing to be flexible.

6.3 Question from Ms. Johanna Kaschke to the Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families, Councillor Abdul Asad

“Holiday Play Centre provision has become too expensive for benefit recipients so children from poor households miss out on professionally run play centre facilities during the summer. To send a child every day during the summer holidays would cost for 25 days £100 + £2 to bring a child there by bus = £50 + a packed lunch cost at £2 per day = £50, + outings costs estimated at £20 total cost = £220.

I think this can be seen as unaffordable for most parents on income support or job seekers allowance taking into consideration all the other costs one has to run a household and clothe a child.

I would like to know why we can't have cheap local play centres?”

Response of the Lead Member:

We do have cheap local play facilities – Junior Youth Service offers very competitive rates. In addition there is a wide range of free activities over the summer. Details are circulated in a free hand out from east End Life, or can be obtained from the Family Information Service.

The average across inner London is £13.65p per day. There is provision in Tower Hamlets which is significantly cheaper than this inner London average. Parents may also access the child care element of the working tax credit and they may be able to claim up to 80% of their child care costs.

Summary of supplementary question from Ms. Kaschke:

The cost can still be high for a whole family. Why can't the Council have affordable play centres for families on benefits and low wages?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

The Council charge £4 per day which is a lot lower than the inner London average of £13.65. I have visited some of the centres myself and seen the children enjoying the excellent provision. I would be happy to discuss this further if you would like to contact me.

7. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**7.1 Question from Councillor Fazlul Haque to the Lead Member for Employment and Skills, Councillor Oliur Rahman**

Can the Lead Member for Employment and Skills tell us what progress has been made to improve partnership working with other public sector organisations to help our residents find work in these difficult times?

Response of the Lead Member:

Through the Tower Hamlets Partnership Structure the Council works in partnership with a number of other public sector agencies helping our local residents to find work. This includes through the Employment Task Group, a sub group of the Prosperous Communities Delivery Group, which engages organisations such as Job Centre Plus, Tower Hamlets College, the Education Business Partnership, NHS etc.

This group has agreed actions in response to current issues such as graduate unemployment and is maturing as a partnership.

The Council is also working with the other Olympic Host Boroughs (Greenwich, Newham, Hackney and Waltham Forest) and the Department of Work and Pensions, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Treasury to develop a Multi Area Agreement which seeks a range of policy freedoms and flexibilities and new approaches to joint working to improve the employment chances for local people and employment outcomes for the Borough.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Fazlul Haque:

Can the Lead Member assure members that performance will be looked at robustly and that clear SLA targets will be set and monitored to ensure that those people who need help receive it?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

I assure you and the Chamber that performance will be monitored vigorously. The Council has also bid to the future jobs fund in order to create further new jobs for local residents.

7.2 Question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis

Would the Lead Member for Housing and Development confirm how many cases have been brought by developers for return of Section 106 contributions that has failed to be spent by the Council in a timely manner have been brought forward and/or settled and what are the sums of money involved?

Response of the Lead Member:

The Council closely monitors received Section 106 contributions in order to ensure that they are effectively spent within the required timeframe.

To date, NO financial contributions have been repaid to developers by the Council.

LBTH regularly receive requests for information about how specific Section 106 contributions have been spent.

To date only one such request, from over 100 received during the past 12 months, has concerned a contribution which has not been utilised within the agreed timeframe.

This was the Norway Wharf development in Limehouse.

This case is unusual and concerns a financial contribution with an extremely short timeframe for spend, around 12 months from the date received.

Due to externalities, which were unforeseeable when the Section 106 Agreement was finalised, the financial contribution could not be spent in the manner detailed by the Agreement despite exhaustive efforts by the Council.

At present, the Council is in discussion with the Developer to negotiate an alternative use for this contribution, which will safeguard the community gain originally intended.

The financial contribution in question consists of £60,000 towards delivery of a pedestrian walkway.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt:

I was invited to a meeting with an organisation specifically to challenge the decisions on Section 106 money. Tower Hamlets is one of three Councils that has been used as a test case. Will the Lead Member urgently meet with me and officers to take this forward?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

I am happy to do this. Can you please put any information you have in writing to me before the meeting? This Council is recognised for its work in this area and we have received over £13 million for education, £22 million for health, £29 million towards transport infrastructure and over £2 million for open space. In addition, over 3000 units of affordable housing have been built.

7.3 Question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah

Can the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener tell us how many drugs arrests have been made in the borough in the last three months and what is being done to ensure that the pressure on drug dealers is kept up as well as telling us what is being done to combat anti-social street drinking in the borough?

Response of the Lead Member:

There is constant pressure being placed upon those individuals dealing in drugs. This is monitored through the Drug use and supply programme board and is personally chaired by the Borough Commander to ensure that the focus is maintained on the issue. So far this year 69 people were arrested in April, 104 in May, and 122 in June. A total of 295 arrests since the 1st April. There is no intention to relax the proactive work being undertaken in this area.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury:

Thank you to the Lead Member for the work that he has undertaken. Would you agree that although a lot of headway has been made there is now a need to target the middle market dealers and make that connection to strategy and delivery? In addition, should some places on the Drug Use and Supply Board be offered to third sector agencies?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

Yes, I will continue to take forward this work and this afternoon I showed some colleagues the progress made on one of the estates. We have invested in an extra 20 police officers and the Council and the partnership will work together to deal with the drug dealers. There are also new THEOs and eight extra drug workers. We are working towards making Tower Hamlets a crime free area.

7.4 Question from Councillor Abjol Miah to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis

In the light of the statement by the Prime Minister that the spending announced for additional social housing will be earmarked for local people, would you provide statistics concerning the allocation of social housing in Tower Hamlets to "non-local people", however they might be defined, in particular how many people have been permanently housed off the Tower Hamlets common waiting list over, say, the last four years, how many qualified on the basis of length of time on the waiting list as opposed to enhanced priority arising from medical and other needs, and how many of those allocated housing had not been

resident in the borough for more than, say, one year, five years and ten years?

Response of the Lead Member:

Under the Council's Lettings Policy applicants without a local connection to the borough are only eligible to be placed in Community Group 4, the lowest priority group.

A local connection is defined as:-

- having lived in the borough for 6 out of the last 12 months
- having lived in the borough for at least 3 of last 5 years
- having permanent employment in the borough
- having a close relative in the borough and they have lived in the borough for at least the last five years.

In the last financial year, 2142 Lettings were made.

Excluding homeless households who may have a temporary accommodation address out of the borough but will have a local connection with the borough, 31 households were identified as not having an address in the borough at the time they were rehoused.

However, of the 31 cases, 25 households were rehoused from Community Groups 1, 2 and 3.

They will, therefore, have had a local connection as defined above in order to qualify under the Council's Lettings Policy for rehousing from these groups.

6 households were rehoused from Community Group 4 and therefore did not have a local connection at the time as defined above.

The comparable figure in 2007/08 was 10 and in 2006/07 it was 16.

None of the 31 cases would have been re-housed on the basis of waiting time alone.

Under the Council's current Lettings policy, eligible applicants are placed in a Community Group based upon their circumstances, with the highest level of need in Community Group 1 and then in descending order of need through Community Groups 2, 3 and 4.

Applicants bid for available property through the choice based lettings system.

Applicants in the higher priority Community Groups will get priority in the main over applicants in the lower priority groups.

The length of time an applicant has been waiting may be taken into consideration, but only when applicants with the same level of priority in the same Community Group are bidding for a property.

The one that has been waiting the longer will then be given preference.

The reasons for rehousing each of the 31 cases have been identified and are set out in the written response.

Households rehoused in 08/09 with address outside the borough at the time of rehousing.

Community Grp	No.	Analysis
CG1 (with local connection)	1	1 health emergency
CG2 (with local connection)	18	12 key workers 2 high priority medical cases 4 care leavers 1 moving from tied accommodation . 1 move on from supported housing
CG3 (with local connection)	6	5 overcrowded households 1 medical recommendation for ground floor only
CG4 (without local connection)	6	1 Elderly Persons Dwelling 3 sheltered housing 2 high floor hard to Let
TOTAL	31	

Total lets 08/09	2,142	
Percent of total	1.5%	

Please note: *the above data excludes households accepted by the borough as unintentionally homeless and in priority need as they will have had a local connection as defined above in order to be accepted by the borough but may well have a temporary accommodation address outside the borough.*

Households rehoused from CG4 for 06/07 and 07/08

06/07	Number	Origin	Rehousing reason
	3	RSL non-partner tenants	Sheltered Housing or Elderly person dwellings
	8	No local connections	Sheltered Housing
	1	No local connection	Successful bidder for single person dwelling
	2	Former private sector tenants	Sheltered Housing or Elderly person dwelling

	2	Supported Hostels	Sheltered Housing
Total	16		

07/08	Number	Origin	Rehousing reason
	2	No local connection	Successful bidders
	1	No local connection	Rehoused by RSL as successful bidder
	2	Owner occupiers	To go into Sheltered Housing
	1	RSL Non partner tenant	To go into Sheltered Housing
	4	No local connection	Sheltered Housing or Elderly Persons Dwelling
Total	10		

The majority of lets in 06/07 and 07/08 were Sheltered Housing or Elderly Persons Dwellings.

One applicant was successful in bidding for a general need dwelling in 06/07, three were successful in bidding for a general need dwelling in 07/08. It is possible that these were hard to let dwellings but without further research it is not possible to identify this in the time available.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Abjol Miah:

Would the Lead Member agree that Gordon Brown's implication that past housing priority has favoured unfairly new migrants to the UK is both grossly inaccurate and panders to the myths peddled by the Nazi BNP and would he agree with the Chair of the Equality Commission that 'much of the public concern about the impact of migration on social housing has, at its heart, the failure of social housing supply to meet the demands of the population' and would he also agree that the only way to address this is for this government to adopt a crash programme of building council homes once again?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

I absolutely agree with the Prime Minister's statement regarding the direction of policy in this area and I welcome the additional resources made available to build social housing. I am happy to see that housing is being built in the borough.

7.5 Question from Councillor Waiseul Islam to the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Rofique Ahmed

Can the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure tell us how many people attended the Baishaki Mela in May and whether he considers this year's event to be an improvement on previous years?

Response of the Lead Member:

The estimated attendance throughout the day and over the three sites of Brick Lane, Allen Gardens and Weavers Fields was 95,000. Yes the event was an improvement on previous years. The programme of artists was excellent with a balance of international and local artists. The stages were well managed and ran without gaps. The parade was the best yet with good participation from local groups. The stalls were well managed and the hot food area was given a clean bill of health by trading standards for the first time ever. Arrests were low, injuries were low. There were no complaints from the public. The police praised the organisation and security arrangements. The parks and surrounding streets were quickly cleaned and restored for public use. The council and its partners did an excellent job. Should the council continue its involvement and support for this event we would endeavour to improve it year on year and see it as a key event in the borough's Cultural Olympiad leading up to 2012.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Waiseul Islam:

This event was a showpiece of social cohesion. We have a theme of One Tower Hamlets where people of all diverse backgrounds come together. Does the Lead Member agree that for future events, local artists, businesses and local people should be more involved?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

I agree that the event has benefited from a balance of international and local artists and this will continue. There has been a great deal of praise for this year's event.

7.6 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck

Could the Lead Member explain why the Council's expenditure on media and public relations has risen 29% from £980,000 in 2007/8 to £1,267,000 in 2008/9 and does he feel this represents good value for money for Council taxpayers?

Response of the Lead Member:

The net percentage increase between 2007/08 and 2008/09 was actually 6%. This increase was due to factors which included maternity leave cover and the introduction of talking newspapers for the blind.

As for value for money, Tower Hamlets Council is of course extremely good value for money overall, having the 6th lowest Council Tax in

London and the 7th lowest in the UK. I do believe that Communications specifically is good value for money.

I will argue strongly for a good communications function – we spend £1.1billion of public money and we have a duty to account for that publicly and transparently. In addition, does Cllr Eaton really want us to have excellent services and not tell residents about them?

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton:

My figures came from the Audit Committee report. I agree it is important that residents are informed for the reasons you outlined but none of this money was spent on telling the residents about the increase in gun crime, homophobic crime and homicide; or about the departure of the Chief Executive. Is it not the case that the Communications budget has been increased dramatically but information is withheld from residents?

Summary of Lead Member's response:

I do not agree with your analysis. In terms of expenditure, if you benchmark us with other boroughs we are in the middle. If Councillor Eaton believes the Council should publish a running commentary on the individual employment negotiations of individual members of staff, then she has a different understanding of employment law than I do. And whilst it is important that the Council paints a realistic picture about crime, there is a fine balance to be struck between reporting crime and also convey what you are doing to improve safety and not scaring people. She will know in addition that the reduction in crime in Tower Hamlets is the largest in any borough in London.

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 of 6th May 2009: Joint Drinking Control Zone with LB Hackney for Arnold Circus and Shoreditch

The meeting considered the report of the Cabinet meeting on 6th May 2009 in relation to the above item.

Councillor Abdal Ullah **MOVED** and Councillor Lutfur Rahman **SECONDED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener introduced the report and other Members then commented on the proposals. After

discussion, the recommendations were put to the vote and were **AGREED** with no Member voting against. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture be authorised to:

- (1) consider any representations received in relation to the consultation referred to in recommendation 2.1 of the report (CAB 148/089) (Attached as Appendix A to the Council report)
- (2) approve the making of the proposed Drinking Control Zone for the area indicated on the plans attached as Appendix A to the report (CAB 148/089)
- (3) consider the inclusion of any additional areas within the Drinking Control Zone, referred to in recommendation 2.1 of the report (CAB 148/089), identified during the consultation as appropriate for such inclusion.

8.2 Report of the Cabinet of 10th June 2009: Strategic Plan 2009/10 - 2011/12: Year 1 Action Plan and Outline Plan

The meeting considered the report of the Cabinet meeting on 10th June 2009 in relation to the above item.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **MOVED** and Councillor Lutfur Rahman **SECONDED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Lead Member for Resources and Performance introduced the report and other Members then commented on the proposals. After discussion, the recommendations were put to the vote and were **AGREED** with no Member voting against. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Council's Strategic Plan 2009/10-11/12: Year 1 Action Plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the report (CAB 004/090) (Attached as Appendix A to the Council report) and the Outline Plan, attached at Appendix 2 be approved.
- (2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to make appropriate and necessary amendments to the Strategic Plan 2009/10-211/12: Year 1 Action Plan and the Outline Plan prior to publication.

At this point the Service Head, Democratic Services informed Members that the time for the meeting had expired. In accordance with Rule 9.2 the remaining items of business (except Motions on Notice under Rule 13)

were deemed formally moved and seconded and were put to the vote without further debate as below.

9. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)

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 Appointment of Interim Chief Executive

The recommendations in the report of the Monitoring Officer were put to the vote and were **AGREED** with no Member voting against. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

That Dr. Kevan Collins, the current Director of Children, Schools and Families, be appointed as Interim Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) from 1st August 2009 until a permanent appointment is made.

10.2 Executive Decisions taken under Special Urgency Provisions

The recommendation in the report of the Leader of the Council was put to the vote and was **AGREED** with no Member voting against. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The Mayor then closed the meeting in accordance with Rule 9 (duration of meeting).

11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Motions 11.1 – 11.13 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 Marc Francis regarding Strangers into Citizens Campaign**
- 11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding future provision of a Multi-Faith Burial Ground**
- 11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding Education cuts**
- 11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Ahmed Hussain regarding Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in the Borough**
- 11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Ohid Ahmed regarding opposing Tory cuts**
- 11.7 Motion submitted by Councillor Abdul Matin regarding eliminating excessive punishment for minor parking offences**
- 11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding Overcrowding Strategy**
- 11.9 Motion submitted by Councillor Alex Heslop regarding support for the co-operative and social enterprise sector**
- 11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding Robin Hood Gardens**
- 11.11 Motion submitted by Councillor Mamun Rashid regarding Tipaimukh Dam**
- 11.12 Motion submitted by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding Crossrail**
- 11.13 Motion submitted by Councillor Abdul Munim regarding Chief Executive's Resignation**

The meeting ended at 10.55 p.m.

Mayor

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2009

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD,
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions submitted by Members of the Council for response by Members of the Executive at the Council meeting on Wednesday 14th October 2009.
2. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted.
3. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. There is a time limit of thirty minutes for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any question not answered within this time will be dealt with by way of a written response. The Mayor will decide the time allocated to each question.
5. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

25 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

7.1 Question from Councillor Waiseul Islam to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah

Can the Lead Member let us know what the situation is regarding the use of CCTV cameras for parking enforcement in the borough, especially around Brick Lane and the Royal London Hospital?

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

Why, given that there are 23,000 people on the borough's housing waiting list, did the Labour Government not give Tower Hamlets Council any money from the most recent round of grants for building new council houses, despite the borough applying for a share of the money?

7.3 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed to the Lead Member for Employment and Skills, Councillor Oliur Rahman

Can the Lead Member for Employment and Skills tell us whether the Jobs Fair he promised us is being delivered, which organisations are taking part and how he feels it will benefit our young people?

7.4 Question from Councillor Abjol Miah to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman

Does the Leader of the Council share with me my dismay that the Lapdancing Association has spent at least £30,000 lobbying to try to water down legislation that will enable councils to clamp down on the proliferation of sex encounter venues, that Liberal Democrat and Tory peers have moved amendments in the unselected House of Lords to try to water down this legislation and that the Tory Front Bench in the House of Lords intends to try again when parliament returns from the summer recess and does he not also agree that this shows that the Tory Party, which proclaims to be the party of "family values" appears to be prefer supporting the profits of these sex encounter venues than the fight against the degradation and exploitation of women?

7.5 Question from Councillor Mohammed Shahid Ali to the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Dr Anwara Ali

Can the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing tell us what is being done by the Council to help older residents cope with the effect of the recession and are there any long-term plans to deal with the increase of elderly people in the borough?

7.6 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck

What is being done to reduce the incidence of homophobic hate crime and to reduce fear of crime among the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender section of our community?

7.7 Question from Councillor Carli Harper-Penman to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Can the Lead Member for Resources and Performance tell us what the Cabinet's intentions are regarding Council Tax and how our Council Tax rates compare to other London Boroughs?

7.8 Question from Councillor David Snowdon to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Would the Lead Member for Resources outline how much the London Borough of Tower Hamlets spends each year on recruitment advertising?

7.9 Question from Councillor Fazlul Haque to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Rania Khan

Can the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships let us know what the plans are for the participatory budgeting process this year, what lessons have been learned from last year and how the process could be improved?

7.10 Question from Councillor Dulal Uddin to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad

Is the Lead Member for Children's Services aware of the recent Ofsted report on the teaching and learning of ESOL at Tower Hamlets College as good and would he confirm that ESOL teaching at the college has provided "value for money" in the past and would continue to do so in the future if properly funded and would he take urgent steps to meet with the college authorities and

representatives of the lecturers' union with a view to ensuring that government money made available to the council for ESOL teaching is provided to the college to restore ESOL courses which are currently going to be cut?

7.11 Question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman

Can the Leader of the Council let us know his view on the "budget airline" business model for Councils proposed by his counterpart in Barnet and whether he feels this is the right way to run an institution that exists to benefit the public?

7.12 Question from Councillor Tim O'Flaherty to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis

How many empty properties have been reported to the Council since 2006? How many of these properties have subsequently been brought into use and how many times has the Council used its powers of Compulsory Purchase to bring empty properties into use?

7.13 Question from Councillor Salim Ullah to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad

Tower Hamlets was one of 10 boroughs in the country to win funding from the Find Your Talent initiative. Can the Lead Member for Children's Services tell us what progress there has been on this?

7.14 Question from Councillor Philip Briscoe to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman

How does the Leader of the Council intend to ensure that the views and concerns of the residents of Tower Hamlets are suitably expressed to the operators of London City Airport?

7.15 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck

Does the Lead Member agree that the far right British National Party and its fellow travellers have been doing all in their power to foster hatred against the Muslim community, that all mainstream politicians should be wary of encouraging prejudice against the Muslim community which will further encourage support for the far right's agenda and that it is regrettable that one of our local MPs has proposed to outlaw the right of members of our community to hold wedding ceremonies in line with their religious traditions and also that the Tory Party has entered into an alliance in the European

Parliament with elements of the far right who have celebrated the Waffen SS and expressed anti-Semitic, racist and homophobic sentiments and does he agree that all legitimate political parties in Tower Hamlets should do all in their power to ensure community harmony rather than community division and hatred?

7.16 Question from Councillor Abdul Matin to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah

What is the annual cost of the parking enforcement service? How many enforcement cases have been brought by parking services in the past year, how many convictions were obtained and what was the total value of the costs awarded to the Council in successful prosecutions?

7.17 Question from Councillor Shirley Houghton to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman

In this time of increased financial pressures, does the Leader of the Council consider the sharing of resources and staff with external organisations to be desirable and prudent or not?

7.18 Question from Councillor Harun Miah to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Is the Lead Member aware of the recent decision of the Trades Union Congress to support a boycott of goods produced in illegal settlements built by Israel in occupied land and by companies involved in the occupation and the building of the wall, and that the Israeli government is now intending to go ahead with the building of a huge settlement near Bethlehem with some 40,000 homes and in the light of these events would he be able to specify what actions his council has taken in the light of the motion passed at full council earlier this year with regard to Israel and Palestine and would he not agree that it is about time this council took stronger action to oppose Israeli aggression and support the beleaguered Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank and would he note that a further aid convoy to Gaza is due to leave London on December 6th?

7.19 Question from Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Rania Khan

Does the Lead Member agree with me that the decision to use the former Local housing office on Bishop's Way in Bethnal Green North is welcome, and will provide much a needed community facility in a building that has been left empty for some years. Will she join with me in thanking the members of the

local community who have worked very hard to ensure that the best use is made of this building?

7.20 Question from Councillor Peter Golds to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Will the Lead Member for Resources explain what plans he has to cover the 9.3% reduction in government expenditure, which will result in a reduction of the grant received by this Council, as outlined in HM Treasury briefings provided to the Labour Government?

7.21 Question from Councillor Abdul Munim to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah

Is the Lead Member aware of the tragic suicide of Fiona Pilkington and the death of her daughter following a long period of anti-social behaviour directed against them and is he willing to undertake an urgent review of procedures in this borough to ensure that problems of acute anti-social behaviour as in this case are properly picked up and dealt with by the authorities and would he in particular be prepared to review with the police the operation of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and in particular address the complaints councillors frequently receive that phone numbers for SNTs are never answered and phone messages are not returned?

7.22 Question from Councillor Dr Emma Jones to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis

How many blocks of flats in the borough, designated as social housing are without valid fire risk assessments?

7.23 Question from Councillor Mamun Rashid to the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Dr Anwara Ali

Is the Lead Member aware of the recent case where an out of hours doctor employed by private contractors wrongly prescribed treatment which then killed the patient and that there is now widespread concern that under-qualified and/or exhausted doctors are being used either directly or indirectly by the NHS who may put patients at risk and would she agree to hold urgent discussions with the chief executive of Tower Hamlets PCT and of Barts and the Royal London Trust to review the systems in place in Tower Hamlets to ensure no similar episodes should take place here?

7.24 Question from Councillor Ahmed Hussain to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah

Will the Lead Member for waste explain why, after years of dedicated service, he is wasting the services of the borough's Head of Waste Education?

7.25 Question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck

Will the Lead Member for equalities indicate how he and his Labour colleagues will, on the one hand proclaim their commitment to One Tower Hamlets and on the other condone senior appointments panels which consist entirely of men including male Labour councillors?

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2009

APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

REPORT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report requests the Council to confirm the appointment of a new permanent Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) for the authority, in accordance with Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989.
- 1.2 The Appointments Sub-Committee is scheduled to meet on 13th October to interview shortlisted candidates for the post of Chief Executive. The recommendation of the Sub-Committee will be tabled at the Council meeting and the Council is recommended to confirm the appointment of the Chief Executive accordingly.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Council is recommended to agree the appointment of a new permanent Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service in accordance with the recommendation of the Appointments Sub-Committee to be tabled at the meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1 Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 requires every relevant authority to “designate one of their officers as Head of the Paid Service”. Article 12 of the Council’s Constitution provides that at Tower Hamlets the officer holding the post of Chief Executive is so designated. Article 4.02 of the Constitution further sets out the requirement that only the full Council meeting may confirm the appointment of the Head of the Paid Service.

- 3.2 Members are aware that following the departure of the former Chief Executive, the authority has undertaken a recruitment exercise to the vacant post of Chief Executive. An Appointments Sub-Committee was established in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules at Part 4.8 of the Constitution, including representation from each political group represented on the Council.
- 3.3 In the interim Dr Kevan Collins, Corporate Director, Children, Schools and Families, was appointed at the Council meeting on 15th July 2009 to serve as Interim Chief Executive until a permanent appointment is made.
- 3.4 The Appointments Sub-Committee is scheduled to meet on 9th and 13th October 2009 to oversee the recruitment process and undertake the short-listing and interview of candidates. The recommendation of the Sub-Committee will be tabled at the Council meeting and the Council is recommended to confirm the appointment of the Chief Executive accordingly.

4. Comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

- 4.1 The Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) reports that the legal implications are set out in the main body of the report.

5. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

- 5.1 The Head of the Paid Service is a statutory officer role. Provision exists within the Council's budget for this appointment.

6. Background documents

- 6.1 No unpublished background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report other than documents which disclose exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER 2009

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Report

- 1.1 Under the Council's constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the Council documenting the Committee's activities over the past year.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and approved its annual report for the year 2008-09 at the meeting of the Committee on 5th May 2009. The annual report is enclosed with the agenda papers.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Council is asked to note the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2008-09.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee co-ordinates all of the scrutiny activity within the Council. Alongside the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, there are six Scrutiny Leads: one each for the five new Community Plan themes, with a further Lead for Excellent Public Services. Under the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny must submit an annual report of its work to Council. This is attached.
- 3.2 The Annual Report outlines the work of both the Committee and the Scrutiny Leads and their working groups during the municipal year 2008-09. It highlights the constructive policy development role that scrutiny undertakes through its reviews. It also outlines the ongoing progress that has been made in embedding overview and scrutiny within the Council. Pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet reports continues to encourage greater debate around key issues, while call-ins have been debated in a rigorous manner at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The majority of the work programme agreed at the start of the year has been delivered.

3.3 Following presentation to the Council, the annual report will be circulated widely within the Council and to its partners. A summary article will also be placed in East End Life.

4. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

4.1 By virtue of Section 21 Local Government Act 2000 the Council has a duty to deliver effective and robust overview and scrutiny of the discharge of executive functions through the medium of one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

4.2 Article 6.03 (d) of the Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the Council on its work. This report fulfils that obligation.

5. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Any financial implications arising from specific Overview and Scrutiny reviews and recommendations as set out in the annual report will be reported to the appropriate executive decision-making body when those recommendations are considered.

6. One Tower Hamlets Consideration

6.1 Equal opportunities are central to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A number of reports and reviews have specific equalities themes including End of Life Care, Child Poverty and Alcohol Misuse Amongst Young people.

6.2 Anti-poverty is central to some aspects of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee particularly the review undertaken by the Scrutiny Lead on Child Poverty and Affordable Homeownership looks at reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for our local residents.

7. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment

7.1 There are no direct implications.

8. Risk Management

8.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

**Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report**

**Tower Hamlets Council
May 2009**

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Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets

Overview and Scrutiny looks at how the Council and its partners deliver services so that they meet local needs and contribute to the overall vision in the borough's Community Plan. It also monitors the decisions made by the Council's Cabinet to make sure that they are robust and provide good value for money.

Overview and Scrutiny has statutory powers to review and scrutinise local health services and make recommendations to NHS bodies. It also considers other issues of concern to local people, including services provided by other organisations, and advises the Cabinet, Council and sometimes other partners, on how those policies and services can be improved.

Membership

The Committee coordinates all Overview and Scrutiny work. Reflecting the overall political balance of the Council during 2008/09 the Committee's membership comprised seven Labour councillors, two Conservative councillors and one each from the Respect and Liberal Democrat parties.

As well as the councillors, five other people served on the Committee who have specific responsibilities for education. There were two representatives appointed by the Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses. There were also two parent governors. Each of these representatives could contribute to any matters discussed by the Committee but they could only vote on education issues. The final member was a non-voting representative of the Muslim community for education issues. The decision to have this position was a local one in recognition of the large Muslim community in the borough.

Scrutiny Chair and Leads

The Chair of the Committee in 2008/09 was Councillor Abdul Asad. The Chair oversees the work programme of the committee as well as taking lead on monitoring the Council's budget.

There are six 'Scrutiny Leads,' one for each of the themes in the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, with a further lead on Excellent Public Services. These have been agreed this year following the refresh of the Community Plan and the introduction of the new themes. The Scrutiny Leads were:

- Cllr Bill Turner (Labour) for "Excellent Public Services," focusing on improving public services to make sure they represent good value for money and meet local needs. He was also Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Cllr Abdul Aziz Sardar (Labour) for "Prosperous Community," focusing on raising educational aspirations, expectations and achievement, and bringing investment into the borough and ensuring residents and businesses benefit from growing economic prosperity.
- Cllr Waiseul Islam (Labour) for "Great Place to Live," focusing on improving housing and the environment and providing a wide range of arts and leisure services.
- Cllr Shiria Khatun (Labour) for "Safe and Supportive," focusing on reducing crime, making people feel safer and providing excellent services to the borough's most vulnerable communities.
- Cllr Ann Jackson (Labour) for "One Tower Hamlets," focusing on reducing inequalities and improving community cohesion through community leadership.
- Cllr Dr Stephanie Eaton (Liberal Democrats) for "Healthy Community," through the Health Scrutiny Panel, focusing on improving local health services and the co-ordination of different health service providers within the borough.

The Scrutiny Leads actively promote the work of Overview and Scrutiny with residents, partners and other stakeholders. They also pick up any relevant issues on behalf of the Committee as a whole and lead the working groups within their theme.

There are four non-executive Members who also sit on the Committee. In 2008/09 these were:

Cllr Abjol Miah

Cllr Oliur Rahman

Cllr Ahmed Hussain – December 2008 – May 2009

Cllr David Snowden - December 2008 – May 2009

They have contributed both to the work of the Committee and Scrutiny Review Groups. In particular their contribution on the call-ins, scrutiny spotlights and performance monitoring have been really useful in holding the Executive to account and ensuring that our services meet the needs of our local residents. They have also been actively involved in a number of the Scrutiny Review Working Groups and contributed to the formation of a number of recommendations from those groups.

What does Overview and Scrutiny do?

The Committee:

- looks at how the Council is performing by monitoring key strategies and plans
- looks at the Council's budget and how it uses its resources.
- sets up time-limited working groups to look at issues in depth and make proposals for change. Suggestions for topics may come from elected Members, full Council, the Cabinet or from local organisations and residents.
- considers decisions made by the Cabinet that are 'called in.' This happens if there is concern about the decision or what information was considered.
- reviews briefly the reports that are going to Cabinet for decision and raises any concerns.

As the Committee has such a broad responsibility, it focuses on a number of key priorities each year. These make up an annual work programme for each of the Scrutiny Leads. For each area there is usually one in-depth review, as well as other shorter pieces of work.

Health Scrutiny

The Government has given local councils specific responsibilities to scrutinise health services. The Health Scrutiny Panel was set up to do this and can look at any matter relating to health services within the borough, including hospital and GP services, health promotion and prevention. This includes the way that health services are planned, how services are provided and how NHS organisations consult with local people.

Under the Healthcare Commission's new Annual Healthcheck for all NHS trusts, the Health Scrutiny Panel can comment on local Trusts' declarations against 24 Core Standards. These cover seven areas:

- Safety
- Clinical and cost effectiveness
- Governance
- Patient focus
- Accessible and responsive care
- Care environment and amenities
- Public health

There is also a duty on local health services to consult with the Health Scrutiny Panel if they are making substantial changes to services.

Annual Report

This report provides a brief summary of the work of Overview and Scrutiny in 2008/09. Each member of the Committee outlines the work that they have undertaken both in the reviews that they have led and also their work on the Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillor Abdul Asad, Chair

This is the fifth year since we changed our arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets. These arrangements include:

- a single co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- five Scrutiny Leads scrutinising the new Community Plan themes and one for Excellent Public Services
- pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet reports
- performance monitoring by considering the Tower Hamlets Index, Strategic Plan, the Diversity and Equality Action Plan, Corporate Complaints and Members' Enquiries
- a robust call-in procedure

We agreed a challenging and extensive work programme in July 2008 and I believe we have delivered on the majority of it. Over the year, we regularly monitored our progress to make sure we remained on track to complete our work.

This year, we have improved significantly the engagement with Lead Members at Committee. They have presented the majority of reports within their portfolio that the Committee considered, as well as responding to call-ins. This is really important in making sure we hold the Executive directly to account and encouraging more discussion and debate among councillors.

There has also been a good level of engagement with the public. Firstly, the majority of our reviews sought the views and experiences of local people through visits and focus groups. And secondly, a number of deputations were made by members of the public at Committee, usually related to a call-in that was being considered.

Performance Monitoring

We monitor the Tower Hamlets Index (THI) regularly, quarterly the Council's Strategic Plan and twice a year we monitor the Diversity and Equality Action Plan. We are the only formal councillor forum that does this and it's important in making sure that our services are performing well. I believe this worked effectively and helped Overview and Scrutiny understand and comment on the wider performance of services - a key part of improving the quality of life of local people.

We also had monthly Scrutiny Spotlights at our Committee meetings for the Cabinet Members including the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. At all the sessions Lead Members discussed the performance and challenges facing services in their area of responsibility. This was particularly useful for us to discuss issues of concern and suggest ways performance could be improved. It also helped involve Lead Members more in the scrutiny process and several of them commented how useful they found the opportunity to discuss policy and performance issues with non-executive councillors at Committee. The Leader of the Council at his spotlight session commented that "*Overview and Scrutiny made a valuable contribution to the work of the authority, both through detailed reviews and comments on items referred to and from Cabinet*".

The Committee consistently challenged Cabinet Members on areas of underperformance, including anti-social behaviour, provisions for young people and perhaps most importantly on recycling. This last area was subject to a full-scale scrutiny review in 2006/07, and the committee was determined that the Council continues the improvement in recycling rates within the borough.

We also considered the Council's annual Corporate and Social Care Complaints report and an update on the Members' Enquiries system and performance. All councillors were pleased to see the improved performance in responding to both complaints and Members' enquiries. Councillors take up many complaints each year, and getting a quick and full response is an essential part of that work. We welcomed the on-going work the Council was doing with local Registered Social Landlords and other partners to improve their performance and quality of response on Members Enquiries.

Policy Framework

Within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework there are a number of key policy documents that set out how the Council will act. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider these before Council agrees them and this year we discussed the following:

- **Tower Hamlets Community Plan to 2020 and Local Area Agreement(LAA)**
The Committee welcomed the new Community Plan to 2020 and the areas identified in the LAA. The Committee highlighted that the lack of figures on some of the targets within the Community Plan proved difficult to understand and scrutinise. The Committee also reinforced to Cabinet the importance of increasing social rental housing and providing affordable housing which is accessible for residents of the borough based on the average income. The Committee also believed that the Council should be benchmarking itself against other Boroughs, particularly the leading performers in each area, and thus driving forward its own goals and performance.
- **Crime and Drugs Reduction Partnership Plan 2008-2011**
The Committee welcomed the Plan and noted that crime still remained a major concern for local residents in the Annual Residents Survey. Members commented that in line with the Community Plan theme of One Tower Hamlets this strategy should also refer to the needs of all communities rather than individual communities. Concerns were also raised about the limited consultation undertaken with residents, as their input into this key strategy is vital to ensure it reflects the needs of all the communities. The importance of up-to-date data was also highlighted in setting appropriate and ambitious targets. Members felt resident satisfaction survey on the police such as the annual residents' survey would be useful to help set appropriate targets for this plan.
- **Children and Young People's Plan 2009-10**
The Committee welcomed the Plan and thanked the Lead Member for Children's Services and Officers for the extensive work that had gone into developing the plan. We raised a number of issues for Cabinet to consider which included the need to be more explicit about how to tackle bullying especially homophobic bullying, and about the support available for 11-13 year olds which was a very important time of transition for young people. The Committee raised concerns about inter-generational worklessness and felt that the Plan should outline how this problem was being addressed and how young people were supported to be successful.

Scrutiny of the Budget

We considered the Council's budget at two of our meetings.

In July we considered the Resource Allocation and Budget Review 2009/10 – 2010/11 and supported the Council's approach in recognition of the strong financial management. However, we made the following observations for consideration by Cabinet:

1. The under spend in the General Fund and Housing Revenue was welcomed and Cabinet was encouraged to utilise this to address issues such as overcrowding;
2. That consideration be given through both the Council's fund and the Working Neighbourhood Fund on addressing unemployment in specific wards;
3. Continue engaging the local community and the third sector in the budget consultation process.

In February, we considered Cabinet's budget proposals for 2009/10. Committee Members challenged the Lead Member for Resources & Performance about the quality of consultation with residents and asked for improvements in future years. The Committee expressed concerns about the amount of money the Council was investing in waste disposal but welcomed the proposals to increase recycling. Finally, we welcomed the significantly increased investment in frontline services and supported the 1.69% per cent increase in Council Tax.

Pre-decision scrutiny

The committee can submit questions about Cabinet reports before a decision is taken. I feel we have strengthened this over the year and commented on 38 Cabinet reports (compared to 65 last year). Among these were:

- Commission into the Public Safety of Young People in Tower Hamlets
- Local Area Agreement (LAA) Refresh
- Draft 2009/12 Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy
- Baishaki Mela Options 2009
- ASBO Publicity Protocol
- Resourcing Youth Services
- Working Neighbourhoods Fund Proposed Interventions
- Recycling Improvement Plan for Tower Hamlets

Our questions and concerns provided further information at Cabinet and clarified some uncertainties thus improving the decision-making process. The responses also inform councillors' decisions over call-ins.

Call-ins

The Committee has considered five call-ins this year. This is a significant decrease from last year when there were 16.

Report Called-in

Heron Quays West – Proposal to Use Compulsory Purchase Powers to Aid Land Assembly and Development
London Thames Gateway Development Corporation - Draft Bromley-by-Bow Land Use Design Brief
33-37 The Oval and Bethnal Green Gasholders Site, E3
Disposal of Greenfel School Site
Communities, Localities and Cultural Services Directorate
Capital Programme 2009/10

O&S Decision

Confirmed
Confirmed
Confirmed
Confirmed
Confirmed

Debate of the call-ins was robust and rigorous. We confirmed all the decisions of the Cabinet although on a number of these the Lead Members gave assurances that they would take some of the concerns raised on board. For example, on 33-37 The Oval and Bethnal Green Gasholders Site the Committee made 3 recommendations which have been taken on by the Lead Member and the Chief Executive and an update provided to the Committee informing us that the investigation is taking place and the Committee will be kept informed with the progress.

It is also worth highlighting that because of the items called in, attendance by local people and other councillors has increased substantially at the Committee meetings. This helps increase the profile of scrutiny and highlight the important role it has within the borough.

Co-opted and Appointed Representatives

After the difficulty in appointing all of the co-opted Members last year we have now managed to recruit the two parent governors. We organised an Induction Session for co-opted members and considered how we could develop their role and help them be more effective. We also welcomed the appointment of 7 local residents from the Future Women Councillors Initiative onto all the Scrutiny Working Groups. This has been particularly useful in bringing local residents views into our scrutiny reviews and also the development of a number of recommendations of the Working Groups.

We intend to build on this further next year to enable co-opted Members to help us engage more local residents in the scrutiny process and ensure that more of their concerns come to the Committee's attention.

Raising the Profile

We continue to improve how and when we communicate with Members, Officers and the public. We used the weekly Members' Bulletin regularly. The Manager's Briefing and the staff newsletter, *Pulling Together*, were also used to promote scrutiny work, so that council officers are well informed about the scrutiny work programme, upcoming reviews, review findings, and how they can be involved.

East End Life and our Scrutiny web pages are also vehicles to keep residents informed about the work scrutiny was undertaking. A number of the reviews attracted significant interest from local people, particularly the Child Poverty and Alcohol Misuse Amongst Young People reviews. More detail of these is included in the reports by the Scrutiny Leads.

We organised a conference on "Scrutinising Partnerships" which was funded by Capital Ambition and part of a programme of events organised by the London Scrutiny Network. There were over 60 councillors and officers from across London in attendance which used the action learning principle with the aim of exploring the inroads made by the local partnership and scrutiny. Participants visited five different projects to gather evidence on the partnership in question and draw up the scope for a scrutiny review. The event therefore provided not only information into how different partnerships functioned in Tower Hamlets but also a way of practising how to scrutinise partnerships. A publication by the London Scrutiny Network "Holding to Account in London" recognised the innovative format of this event but more importantly highlighted the positive work scrutiny in Tower Hamlets have undertaken with the local partnership.

The Scrutiny review from 2007/08 - 'Licensing of Strip Clubs' - was recognised as an example of good practice by the London Scrutiny Network in the publication mentioned above. They

highlighted how scrutiny can engage the local community on a controversial issue and bring forward recommendations which directly represent the views of local residents. They highlighted the good practice and recommended it to other councils. The scrutiny report was also presented to the Department of Culture, Media and Sports as part of their consultation with local authorities on the control of lap dancing establishments. The Council's response to this consultation was primarily based on the scrutiny review and outlined the Council's support for all forms of striptease to be placed under the category of 'sexual encounter establishments'.

Checking our own progress

Twice a year we monitor the recommendations we have made, not just those at committee but also those from our reviews and other investigations. Services are asked to provide an update so we can see whether progress is being made. The latest monitoring indicates that nearly all of our recommendations since July 2006 are being acted on or achieved. As part of the Health Scrutiny Panel's work programme we also considered the progress being made against the action plan of last year's review on Tobacco Cessation.

One key area of improvement that the committee needs to focus on in future years is the level of participation by back bench councillors in the Scrutiny Reviews. We recognise that members have many other commitments and that the meetings were mostly packed into the latter part of the year. Nevertheless, these reviews were heavily dependent upon the involvement of a small group of committed councillors. We hope that each of the Party Leaders will encourage all members of their Political Group to take an interest in at least one of the Scrutiny Reviews in future.

Communities in Control White Paper

We have begun work with officers across the Council and our partners in developing a pilot for the Councillor Call for Action and also implementing other areas of actions identified in the Communities in Control White Paper and currently being considered by Parliament in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill. Discussions are underway and we hope to incorporate this into our work programme for next year.

Conclusion

Overall, I believe the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has made considerable progress this year. In particular, having Lead Members attend the Committee to present reports and outline the reasons for decisions has significantly enhanced the role and value of scrutiny. We are holding the Executive to account - particularly around performance monitoring and through considering call-ins – and influencing Cabinet decisions. The reviews have also made an important contribution to addressing local people's concerns – for example, around alcohol misuse amongst young people and affordable homeownership. In addition to this reviews have worked with partners, officers and other councillors to improve services.

In the pipeline are Government proposals to extend the role of scrutiny through the proposals outlined in the Communities in Control White Paper in particular around increasing the visibility of scrutiny and increasing scrutiny of the partnership providing Councillors a greater say in place shaping their area. This is an exciting time to be part of Scrutiny and I believe that our work this year has equipped us to strengthen the impact of the committee in the future.

The refresh of the Community Plan in 2008 has led to a new role for the Excellent Public Services Scrutiny portfolio, with the specific concern of the portfolio being to improve public services by ensuring they represent good value for money and meet local needs. I was keen this year to use this opportunity to review one of our key services to the community – safeguarding children.

Early Intervention – Child Protection

This year's review focused on early intervention in the field of Children's Social Care, which involves providing support for families before the need for statutory interventions, such as taking children into care, arises. This area captured my attention as a key area for review given the high and growing workload of the Children's Social Care service. Given that Tower Hamlets has the fastest growing children's population in Europe, more children than ever are set to come through Children's Services in the next decade, meaning that Children's Social Care Service will continue to feel the pressure of producing cheaper and better outcomes for families. I firmly believe that our ability to protect children in the borough drives to the core of our responsibilities as a local authority, and events unfolding in the London Borough of Haringey during the course of this review gave a sobering back-drop for our work.

The key aim of the review was to investigate the value of existing Early Intervention services relating to safeguarding, identify any gaps in existing provisions and explore the case for extending the services in these areas.

Members found that there were already numerous examples of excellent practice both within the Council and across partner agencies, and that there was a strong value case in extending early intervention services, both in terms of value for money, and improved outcomes for families and children.

Working on this review underlined to me the importance of targeting the family as a whole in our response to the needs of children, and the working group has made recommendations relating to enhancing services around domestic violence, parental mental health and parental substance abuse. The crucial importance of integrated working was also highlighted in this review, and a number of recommendations have been made relating to improving interfaces between different services and partners to improve communication, and ultimately, the service provided to the families in need.

Conclusion

The timeliness of this review, given the current pressures being placed on Councils across the country to review their safeguarding arrangements, has been most welcome, and I feel the review has been greatly productive in increasing understanding of one of our most fundamental and difficult duties as a council; safeguarding children. From the findings of this review I believe that the dedication of officers and partners in this field will continue to lead to innovation and improved service outcomes for families and children in the community.

The Prosperous Communities portfolio is wide-ranging and covers learning, worklessness and enterprise. My role as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been to support the Council in creating opportunities and ensuring our residents have the skills and support needed to go into employment and to support people to make the best choices to improve their quality of life.

The starting block to realising a prosperous community is to offer good quality education in schools up to GCSE level to empower young people with the opportunity to go onto further education or employment. Moreover, if we are to achieve a prosperous community then parents will need to be involved more in encouraging young people to do better at school. With this in mind, I wanted to carry out a review that would help support parents and allow them to get more involved in their child's learning.

Parental Engagement in Secondary Education

The Parental Engagement in Secondary Education review focused on how the council and schools support parents to play a more active part in their children's learning. The review recognised that parental engagement is a key determinant of positive outcomes for their children and that good parenting is a major factor in improving children and young people's life chances.

The key aim of the review was to evaluate current practices to improve parental engagement. Therefore the Working Group reviewed the following Tower Hamlets Initiatives;

- Extended School
- Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities
- Transition Information Sessions/ Parent Information Point (PIP)
- Passport to Learning and Targeted workshops for parents of Year 7 learners
- Maths curriculum workshop

Through focus groups with parents, the Working Group found that on the whole provisions offered by the Council are 'good,' but more focus is needed to support hard to reach parents particularly BME parents who face language barriers. Also parents felt that they needed more help and information from schools on best ways to support children during school years. The review recommendations include; improving access to information, more support to access services and improved consultation with parents.

Conclusion

I firmly believe that the Parental Engagement in Secondary Education review has contributed to a very positive year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Recommendations will help to achieve a better partnership between parents and schools that will help realise our aim of creating a prosperous community.

As Scrutiny Lead for A Great Place to Live, my remit covers housing, environment, arts and leisure. Affordable homeownership has been a local concern for some time and I was keen to explore ways of improving access to local homeownership. This is a key issue for our borough because of the huge number of people on our housing waiting list and the cost of properties along with low income level poses a significant challenge for local residents' ability to access affordable homes.

Scrutiny Review: Affordable homeownership

The review focused on ways of increasing access to affordable homeownership for local residents. In considering this, we looked at access including publicity, types of schemes, take-up and considered shared ownership as a current model. The Working Group also explored other models of affordable homeownership including community land trust and shared equity with a view to recommending an introduction of this to increase affordable supply.

We met five times which included a focus group with local developers and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). We also undertook visits to 2 local schemes in Docklands which were particularly useful in considering issues around pricing and layout of current schemes.

This has been an interesting review to work on because of the numbers of RSL partners and developers involved in our discussions. I believe we have come up with recommendations which will help to improve the publicity of the services available for affordable homeownership and introduce newer models to increase affordable supply. A key recommendation we have made is that the Council works with local developers and RSLs to develop more affordable housing through the 'discounted sales models' which we considered during our focus group.

The Community Land Trust Model was discussed in length by the Working Group and we looked at a particular model which we feel can be further explored and have therefore recommended that the Cabinet undertake a feasibility study to consider its full merit.

The review concluded by recognising that in the current climate in Tower Hamlets with all its housing issues, any products which are affordable will possibly only supply small numbers and the demand will always be high. However, we were keen to ensure that we did not accept this as a barrier and continue to test and debate ways of introducing more affordable housing for our residents.

Conclusion

Although the funding arrangements in housing can be complex impacting on a range of things from publicity of schemes to the tenure mix, the Working Group were keen to ensure that we used this review to increase access and supply and a number of recommendations are put forward for this purpose. We hope our review and recommendations add value to the existing work the Council is doing to increase affordable housing and this helps improve the quality of life for local residents.

We all desire for our borough to be a place where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential, a place where crime is uncommon and where communities can live together in peace. Indeed the Tower Hamlets Community Plan makes specific reference to realizing this as central to achieving a safe and supportive community.

Whilst thinking about this year's work programme, I wanted to focus on a scrutiny review that helped to achieve a community that is safe. Moreover, it was my wish that the review focused on improving outcomes for our youth population. To this end, as Scrutiny Lead for Safe and Supportive, I decided to carry out a review investigating the extent to which young people are misusing alcohol.

Smashed, Alcohol Misuse amongst Young People

The key aims of the review were to look at circumstances that lead young people to drink and misuse alcohol and to explore consequences of misuse. A further aim was to review current enforcement and prevention practices aimed at diverting young people away from alcohol. Therefore, the Working Group reviewed the health effects of alcohol misuse, the effects on crime and performance in school. The Working Group also reviewed the role of Trading Standards and the Police in preventing young people from purchasing alcohol and the role and responsibilities of treatment agencies and community organisations.

The Working Group held meetings and focus groups with representatives from the Council's Community Safety Service, the Police, Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust and Young People. We also considered evidence, case studies and data gathered by Central Government in order to come to our conclusions and recommendations.

The Working Group found that the number of young people drinking alcohol in Tower Hamlets is still low, however increasing all the time. The frustration for the Working Group was that evidence presented on the number of young people drinking was largely anecdotal and therefore could not be substantiated. Moreover, a significant time was spent evaluating the perceived rise in young Bangladeshi drinkers. During the meeting with local community organisations; the Group were told that there *is* a rise in Bangladeshi drinkers.

The review recommendations included; effective promotion of information about sensible drinking and the problems associated with alcohol misuse to young people and parents, strong enforcement and prevention of young people purchasing alcohol and improved focus on health and alcohol education in schools and youth clubs.

Conclusion

I have really enjoyed this year and embraced the many challenges of being the scrutiny lead for Safe and Supportive; I believe recommendations of the Smashed, Alcohol Misuse Amongst Young People review will present further focus to service delivery and increase commitment to preventing young people from misusing alcohol.

As Scrutiny Lead for One Tower Hamlets, my remit focuses on achieving the aspirations of building One Tower Hamlets which was introduced through our new Community Plan. The proportion of children living in poverty in Tower Hamlets is higher than elsewhere in England. Therefore, Child poverty is a critical issue locally because on many measures we have high levels of poverty, the biggest driving factor being parental unemployment. The other issue I was keen to explore was how community leadership can contribute to tackling child poverty by establishing a model which brings greater resident involvement into the way we develop services and policies.

Scrutiny Review: Child Poverty

The review focused on using a community leadership model to explore peoples' experiences and barriers to employment and to use this to make recommendations for improving services. In addition to this, the review also looked at ESOL, debt and financial management, child care provision, Employment Strategy, Child Poverty Pledge and Jobcentre Plus.

Working Group Members undertook a number of visits and focus groups which together with in-depth interviews became known as the One Tower Hamlets Interview model because we were able to use the information we obtained to make recommendations which are reflected in the final report. I think the One Tower Hamlets interviews in particular have worked really well to inform policy developments and we have made recommendations to support community leaders to use such a model to bring forth residents views in service development. The review ran concurrently with the development of the 'Tackling Child Poverty Strategy'. We welcomed the key themes identified within the strategy and the opportunity to contribute to this during the duration of the working group review.

It has been a challenging and exciting review to work on and I know the Working Group Members have found the One Tower Hamlets Interview model really useful. I believe we have come up with wide ranging and challenging recommendations focusing on supporting women and families into employment and access to employment support. There are a number of recommendations in the report which require responses from our partner agencies. We have also made a recommendation on using the London Child Poverty Pledge to influence partners to recognise local employment needs.

We noted the complexities of child poverty at the start of the review and were keen to add value to what's in place already given that we now have a Beacon Award for Tackling Child Poverty. The review concluded by recognising that despite the depth of the impact of child poverty locally, there are provisions in place which will attempt to see the cycle of poverty reversed. The review was further evidence that we have to ensure we understand the needs and the barriers that local people face, in order to offer really effective solutions to poverty.

Conclusion

We welcomed the development of the Strategy and the Beacon Award received by the Council on Tackling Child Poverty, The on-going work by the Council and the partnership are addressing some of the key areas which need further work to tackle this important issue. However, we cannot stand still in striving to improve services and the impact it has on very real lives and I hope the community leadership model we have developed through this review is put to use again for the benefit of local residents. Participation in this kind of review is a real benefit to councillors in understanding our community, and will, I hope continue to offer us real help in assessing how effective our public services are.

The Health Scrutiny Panel undertakes the Council's functions under the Health and Social Care Act, 2001. The Panel includes members who are co-opted from the Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK) Steering Group to represent patient views. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Dr Amjad Rahi and Myra Garrett from THINK and Ann Edmead Co-opted Member from Future Women Councillors Initiative and John Lee for their contributions. I would also like to thank Councillor Ann Jackson (Vice-Chair) who kindly chaired meetings in my absence.

This was the third year of the four year work programme developed by the Health Scrutiny Panel. We looked to build on the work undertaken in the last 2 years by still retaining our focus on reducing health inequalities. We undertook a Challenge Session in which we were pleased to note the development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which is an important document that helps us better understand how local health needs are used to inform service planning. A key recommendation arising out of this session was the continuous involvement of Members during the development and scrutiny of the interim findings of the report.

The Panel undertook three service visits this year as part of our Induction process. At the Barkantine Centre Members were given a tour of the facilities available at the new centre. We also visited the Personality Disorder Unit at the East London NHS Foundation Trust and the Barts and the London NHS Trust at their office in the Royal London Hospital. These visits were useful in developing the panel's relationship with the Trusts and understanding of service provision by the NHS.

End of Life Care Review

The key Health Scrutiny review this year looked at End of Life Care focusing on how social care provision of end of life services meet the needs of local people and the effectiveness of co-ordination across health and social care at end of life.

The Health Scrutiny Panel were keen to ensure their work added value to the Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trusts' existing service improvement programme for end of life care provision. We agreed that it would be useful to bring our local knowledge of communities to bear on the wider programme, to provide a check on the robustness of the plans and to be consulted over proposed changes to the way services will be provided in the future. The review also provided a critical friend role in overseeing the Delivering Choice Programme which was piloting the use of Marie Curie toolkit to redesign and improve end of life care services.

The Panel also identified a significant community leadership challenge to promoting wellbeing within the scope of end of life care around the challenges of making talking about death and dying more acceptable and the concept of a planned and or good death.

The recommendations cover a range of areas including the need to improve ways of encouraging further debate and dialogue between service providers and users, their family and carers, extending hospice care in the community, developing a common understanding between all service providers of end of life care and creating a single point of contact for end of life care services. We hope that these recommendations will be implemented quickly and in full and further support the issues identified by the PCT in their improvement programme.

Pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Last year's report on Healthcare for London: A Framework for Action included proposals for the development of a stroke strategy and seven hyper-acute stroke centres and the development of trauma networks with three major acute centres. The proposals were underpinned by a clinical case for change for stroke and major trauma services. Authorities across London including from neighbouring Counties convened the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) to prepare a response to the consultation on the proposals.

Both I and Cllr Luffa Begum were nominated to represent the borough on the JOSC and it has been a challenging experience where we have engaged with complex health issues considering both local needs and the need to develop a strategic-level voice on London-wide issues.

The JOSC is still considering evidence from a number of sources including hospitals across London who provide Stroke and Trauma Services and will produce their draft report in June 2009.

Organ Donation

Cllr Bill Turner undertook research and publicity to encourage local BME communities to consider organ donation. An article was placed in East End Life and also sent to other local papers which encouraged more BME people to come forward as organ donors. The article highlighted the need for BME donors with 23% of people currently waiting for a kidney transplant but only 3% of donors from the same background. The article also highlighted the various religious views on organ donation and noted that it was welcomed by all major religions.

The Annual Healthcheck

The Healthcare Commission assesses all NHS Trusts in the UK against 24 Core Standards covering the seven areas of safety, clinical and cost effectiveness, governance, patient focus, accessible and responsive care, care environment and amenities and public health.

The Panel reviewed the Annual Healthcheck Declarations of all three Trusts as part of the Annual Healthcheck process and has provided comments based on evidence gathered over the past year.

The issues raised included the need for continuous engagements of patients in service development, improving customer services at the local acute hospital and continue working to ensure the health trusts employ a workforce that reflect the local community. I am pleased that all the Trusts responded positively to our comments and are taking measures to address them.

Conclusion

It has been another positive and very full year for the Health Scrutiny Panel. We have considered a number of key reports through the formal Panel meetings which included consultation on PCT managed practices and emergency dental services review and annual complaints reports from Bart's and the London NHS Trust and Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust. We have also monitored last year's review on tobacco cessation through an update on progress of implementing our recommendations and are pleased to report the positive work the Council and the PCT have undertaken to implement our recommendations.

Scrutiny and Equalities in Tower Hamlets

If you want to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets, please contact the Scrutiny Policy Team:

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2009

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD,
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

SUMMARY

1. Thirteen motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for the Council meeting on Wednesday 14th October, 2009.
2. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21st May 2008, the order in which the motions are listed is by turns, one from each group, continuing in rotation until all motions submitted are included. The rotation starts with any group(s) not reached at the previous meeting.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months unless notice of motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS

Set out overleaf are the motions that have been submitted.

11.1 Motion submitted by Councillor Tim Archer regarding ESOL classes at Tower Hamlets College

Proposed: Councillor Tim Archer

Seconded: Councillor Ahmed Hussain

This Council notes the Learning and Skills Council cuts of £1.75m to Tower Hamlets College for the provision of ESOL classes.

This Council notes that the Learning & Skills Council has spent £400,000 on hiring celebrities to various awards evenings and publicity stunts.

This Council believes that nothing entrenches poverty more than a resident not being able to speak English.

This Council resolves to fill the gap from its own resources to ensure that ESOL classes at Tower Hamlets College are not cut.

11.2 Motion submitted by Councillor Abdul Asad regarding ESOL provision in Tower Hamlets

Proposed: Councillor Abdul Asad

Seconded: Councillor Lutfur Rahman

This Council notes:

That the provision of English as a second language (ESOL) training is crucial to social cohesion in Tower Hamlets.

That in the wake of alterations to funding by the Learning and Skills Council, Tower Hamlets College reduced the amount of community based ESOL it delivered

That the College has brought to an end a long-running dispute with unions with only 6 compulsory redundancies from 400 part-time staff.

That the College continues to provide around 1350 ESOL places.

That the Council has committed money from WNF funding to commission around 650 ESOL places. £1.178m from WNF for ESOL over a period of eighteen months (April 2009 – Sept. 2010)

That further funding is being sought which would increase this to around 870 places.

That a Scrutiny Review is due to take place on 27 October to see how the Council can help the College and ensure that ESOL provision continues to reflect the needs of the community.

That the proposal by some members of the opposition to use Council reserves to shore up the College is:

- a) Outside the statutory instrument of the Council and therefore technically illegal.
- b) Not a long term solution to the College's funding problems as the Council would have to continue filling the black hole in the College's finances.
- c) Nothing more than theatricality and cynical manipulation of a serious issue for short-term political gain.

This Council resolves:

To continue working closely with the College to help it overcome its financial issues.

To lobby the government to ensure that Tower Hamlets receives the ESOL funding that is crucial to the social cohesion of the borough.

To continue increasing its own ESOL provision and commissioning to meet the needs of residents with the aim of creating 250 new ESOL places in the next 12 months.

11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding safeguarding the environment

Proposed: Councillor Stephanie Eaton

Seconded: Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan

This Council believes that:

A. A healthy natural environment is crucial not only to quality of life but also to the sustainability of life on the planet; it provides humankind with food, clean water and clean air, employment, opportunities to improve physical and mental health and the enjoyment of beauty and tranquillity.

B. Humans are using the planet's finite natural wealth at an ever-increasing and unsustainable rate, threatening to exhaust key resources by the middle of the century unless net consumption is curbed.

C. The planet's delicately balanced ecosystems and the diversity of plant and animal life are crucial to humankind's future health, well-being and ultimately survival;

D. Public policy on the natural environment should be guided by technical and scientific evidence but also by the value placed on the natural environment by people.

This Council proposes to:

1. Introduce policies to cut net consumption and ultimately achieve zero waste to landfill by 2020 by:

a) developing waste recovery plans for all types of waste in Tower Hamlets to maximise the recovery of useful resources and bring efficiencies of scale.

2. Boost water efficiency by:

a) Providing stronger planning guidance in favour of compulsory rainwater harvesting systems, greywater recycling, green roofs and sustainable urban drainage systems.

b) Introducing smart water metering by 2020 to inform and support fair billing and reduce energy and water use.

3. Defend the natural environment at local level by:

a) Introducing policies, to be agreed between neighbouring local authorities, with measurable objectives which could include the promotion of biodiversity, the restoration and protection of natural features such as water channels, the reduction of flood risk, increased tranquillity, the encouragement of local food production and the protection green spaces.

b) Using environmental capacity as the key guidance for identifying sites for development.

c) Creating a new designation – similar to SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) status – to protect green areas of particular importance or value to the community (such as parks and other green spaces in our urban environment).

d) ensuring the full environmental cost of demolition and replacement of useable buildings is included in sustainability calculations by planning officers.

4. Act on noise and light pollution, with policies to:

a) Improve and enforce noise pollution regulations, tackling the noisiest vehicles and planes and strengthening building regulations.

b) Recognise the threat of burgeoning external lighting to both wildlife and people's enjoyment of their local environment and the skies, working with government agencies to control and where possible reduce the impact of artificial lighting.

5. Provide proper enforcement of environmental legislation by:

a) Ensuring environmental crimes, including water pollution and wildlife crime, are properly enforced and the penalties truly reflect the damage done and the cost of clean-up.

11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah in support of a directly elected Mayor

Proposed: Councillor Abjol Miah

Seconded: Councillor Fozol Miah

1) This Council notes that

a) a consultation exercise is currently being undertaken on the future leadership structure for the authority - i.e. a 'New Style' Leader and Cabinet model or a Directly Elected Mayor - as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, ending on 22nd October

b) there have been no less than four different 'New Style' Leaders of the Council over the last four and a half years

c) these Leaders have been selected from within the ranks of the Labour group without reference to the wishes or the knowledge of the voters

d) these Leaders have exercised huge power over council decision-making through the Cabinet system

e) these Leaders have remained unknown to the vast majority of Tower Hamlets voters despite the huge power they exercise

f) the consultation exercise has been executed impeccably by the council officers responsible but that a lack of interest in the exercise by the Labour and Conservative parties has meant that little publicity has so far been attracted to the consultation process

g) Eastendlife has carried adverts for the consultation but with the rider that the standing policy of the Council is in favour of the 'New Style' Leader and Cabinet system

h) belatedly more profile was given to this consultation with the positions of the different political groups represented briefly but that this did not represent a proper debate about the issues

i) opinion surveys show that a majority of Tower Hamlets residents would prefer a directly elected mayor

2) This Council regrets that Eastendlife did not provide the opportunity for the arguments for and against the two systems to be properly represented in order to stimulate education, debate and interest in this issue

3) This Council believes that

a) there is a need for a radical shake-up in the way the Council is run

b) Tower Hamlets needs strong council leadership to deal with its many very serious problems

c) that strong leadership may be properly democratically accountable to the voters of Tower Hamlets

d) a directly elected mayor would provide both strong leadership and direct democratic accountability

e) notwithstanding the fact a decision on a referendum is to take place at the December full Council meeting, the Council should change its standing policy in advance of the end of the consultation process and agree to support a change to a directly elected mayor

f) a referendum should be held to decide the future governance of Tower Hamlets Council in order to let the voters themselves decide the issue, with the final decision on this to be taken at the December meeting of the Council

11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Rachael Saunders regarding road crossing outside Mile End tube station

Proposed: Councillor Rachael Saunders

Seconded: Councillor Ann Jackson

This Council notes that:

The pelican crossing outside Mile End Tube is extremely dangerous and that there have been five accidents on this stretch of road in the last three years, including one fatality at the beginning of 2009.

That in a meeting with local Councillors and London Assembly Member John Biggs on the 20th April Transport for London (TfL) committed to making a number of changes to the crossing to make it safer, including changing it from a pelican to a puffin crossing and reducing the traffic from three lanes to two.

That this work has still not been done 7 months later and TfL are now renegeing on their commitment to complete the works.

That this is just the latest in a long line of TfL's failures to discharge their responsibilities towards the safety of Tower Hamlets residents.

This Council believes that:

For TfL to take no action to make safer this dangerous crossing after a fatality belies a serious lack of interest in the safety of residents of Tower Hamlets.

That despite statements to the contrary, TfL and the Mayor of London see the unimpeded flow of traffic as a higher priority than the lives of pedestrians.

This Council resolves to:

Call on TfL to urgently honour their commitments made on the 20th April to make this crossing safer.

Explore using the Sustainable Communities Act to transfer responsibility and funding for pedestrian crossings to this Council.

11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding 'Parking free' developments

Proposed: Councillor Harun Miah

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

1) This Council notes that

a) new build housing in this borough financed with so-called section 106 money has been designated 'parking free', meaning that residents were not permitted the normal residency rights to residents parking permits

b) some residents of these properties were not properly informed that these properties were 'parking free'

c) confusion was compounded by the fact that residents permits were issued to a number of residents over a number of years in error and were then suddenly withdrawn when the error came to light

d) these 'parking free' developments discriminated against those who were dependent on owning and using a vehicle for their livelihood

e) these 'parking free' developments discriminated against people dependent on vehicle ownership and use to cheaply transport their families

f) these 'parking free' developments have not significantly reduced car ownership in use in Tower Hamlets and therefore are not an effective means of dealing with the environmental problems of car ownership and use

2) This Council welcomes the decision that future housing development in the borough should not be 'parking free'

3) This Council believes that

a) existing 'parking free' estates and developments coming on stream should have the 'parking free' restrictions lifted, allowing residents equal rights with other existing residents and future residents of the borough

b) if lifting these restrictions means there need to be legislative changes, then the Council should urgently approach the government to secure those changes.

11.7 Motion submitted by Councillor Oliur Rahman regarding redevelopment of Limehouse Practice

Proposed: Councillor Oliur Rahman
Seconded: Councillor Mohammed Shahid Ali

This Council notes:

The concern of the patients of the Limehouse practice at proposals by the PCT to move the practice to from its existing site.

The opposition of GPs at the practice to the proposed move.

The concern of the residents of Farron Street at suggestions by the PCT that the practice may be moved to their location.

The flawed designs proposed by the PCT which involve the placement of the surgery on the ground floor and a basketball court on the roof – raising health and safety concerns.

The failure of several high ranking PCT officials to attend meetings with the patients of Limehouse practice, despite having agreed to do so.

This Council resolves:

To instruct the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Chief Executive of the PCT asking her to meet with the patients of the Limehouse practice and residents of the area.

To encourage the PCT to find the funds to redevelop the current site rather than moving to a new location.

To identify land for a temporary practice while the redevelopment is taking place.

11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding Overcrowding Strategy

Proposed: Councillor Fozol Miah
Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

1) This Council notes that

a) over 15,500 families are estimated to be overcrowded in Tower Hamlets

b) more than half the overcrowded families live in so-called 'social housing'

c) the percentage reduction in overcrowding has been very small in recent years

d) overcrowding is a scourge which makes life miserable for those who are overcrowded and can lead to educational under-achievement, anti-social behaviour and poor mental and physical health

e) with estimates of population increase of 25% in the borough between 2006 and 2016, the scourge of overcrowding is likely to get worse rather than better unless radical action is taken

2) This Council welcomes

a) proposals to change the priority allocation of housing so that, in general, overcrowded households will enjoy equal status to homeless households

b) any initiatives to expand the amount of larger housing available for social rent to alleviate overcrowding

3) This Council recognises that

a) changes to the priority allocation will not resolve the underlying problem of a mismatch in the supply of and demand for housing that is genuinely affordable by many residents of this borough

b) the recent proposals to increase the supply of housing that might be made available to overcrowded families will fall considerably short of helping the proclaimed target of 500 families over three years and is, anyway, far from adequate given the scale of the problem

c) the relatively small percentage of new build properties designated for social rent is one of the major reasons why supply is failing to keep in line with demand

4) This Council regrets the fact application was made to build just 17 council houses in the first round of bidding for government money made available for council house building and that that bid was, at least initially, rejected as not 'value for money'

5) This Council believes that

a) only a massive council house building programme will address what is already and crisis of overcrowding and will become an overcrowding catastrophe on available predictions

b) central government should make far more money available for this council house building programme

c) a massive council house building programme will have other beneficial effects to the economy including creating a large amount of employment at a time when unemployment is rising rapidly.

11.9 Motion submitted by Councillor Rania Khan regarding using new Licensing powers to close lap dancing venues

Proposed: Councillor Rania Khan

Seconded: Councillor Bill Turner

This Council notes that:

- We welcome the Government's plans to proceed with plans to implement the Bill to give councils more power to halt the proliferation of lap-dancing clubs, the number of which has more than doubled in the past four years to more than 300.
- The new Licensing laws allow the Council to close lap dancing venues which are inappropriately located, for example in a residential area, near schools, places of education and places of religion.
- Tower Hamlets has, at last, the opportunity to rid itself of these sexist, and unwanted sex encounter venues. It is time to give them zero tolerance.
- Women and Equalities Minister Harriet Harman's speech and her continuous support for the Police and Crime Bill, Lap Dancing Legislation
- This Legislation gives Tower Hamlets a chance to close and curb all lap dancing venues.
- For too long Tower Hamlets has been the sexual playground for City spivs and bankers.
- These venues are often associated with drugs, prostitution, human trafficking, alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour and noise.
- The Home Office Minister, David Hanson has delivered a consultation paper last week which will require:
 - 1) All existing venues to reapply for a licence
 - 2) ALL lap dancing venues will have to apply to trade as 'sex-encounter venues'
 - 3) This should give local authorities and local stakeholders a new opportunity to stop lap dancing clubs in their area. It will allow Councils to close down clubs where Councillors and residents object.
 - 4) It is clear that Labour Deputy Leader and Women's Minister Harriet Harman has now taken against these venues.
- This council also welcomes the Women and Equalities Minister's speech to step up action to protect women from violence and sexual exploitation and to tackle human trafficking. Athens saw a doubling of women being trafficked to 40,000 women were trafficked into forced prostitutions following the Athens Games in 2004.

This Council resolves:

- To adopt a zero tolerance approach in Tower Hamlets for sex encounter venues that violate their licensing terms or that are located in inappropriate places.
- To condemn the home affairs spokesmen for Lib Debs and Conservative parties in the House of Lords for tabling a series of amendments designed to water down measures
- To condemn the Conservative party for offering £10 discount voucher from a lap-dancing club which was included in a welcome pack to conference-goers

- To welcome the move by the Women and Equalities Minister to ban City firms from claiming back tax on trips to lap dancing clubs.
- To work closely with the Police and other partner agencies to take the urgent action needed to prevent illegal trafficking of women and we need to work with ODA and other neighbouring councils to find a strategy to combat this crime.

11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding Tower Hamlets College strike

Proposed: Councillor Dulal Uddin

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

1) This Council notes that

a) college lecturers at Tower Hamlets College recently went on all out strike action over cuts to courses and compulsory redundancies

b) that strike has now ended as a result of the lifting of the threat of compulsory redundancies

c) courses are still being cut at the college and in particular that ESOL provision is being severely curtailed

d) the cutting of ESOL provision will lead to the dispersal of the nationally recognised expertise built up over a considerable period of time with significant success rates at the college, particularly through its outreach work

e) the cutting of ESOL provision will impact particularly severely on women from the BME communities many of whom need ESOL classes to enable them to participate fully in the community in Tower Hamlets

f) the cutting of ESOL provision will most adversely affect the Outreach programme which has successfully delivered quality courses inside local communities for a number of years, with provision currently being cut at 10 centres with 20 classes lost

g) the Government has consistently claimed that increased funding of £1.2 million to the council should offset cuts in LSC funding for ESOL provision at Tower Hamlets College

2) This Council regrets that strike action was necessary at the college and welcomes the lifting of the threat of compulsory redundancies which has enabled the lecturers to return to work

3) This Council believes that

a) funding should not have been cut to the college

b) the Government should have stepped in to restore funding when the scale of the damage to the provision of essential education in this borough became apparent

c) the college authorities should have united with college lecturers to oppose the cuts

d) the Council should have agreed to temporarily use reserves to preserve educational provision whilst seeking a long-term solution

4) This Council agrees to temporarily use reserves to restore community ESOL provision provided by the Outreach programme at Tower Hamlets College

5) This Council recognises that using reserves to support education at Tower Hamlets College in the short run is not sustainable over the longer term

6) This Council believes that the Lead Member for Children's Services and officers directly responsible for lifelong learning ESOL provision should seek urgent meetings with representatives of the college authorities and the lecturers' union with a view to making Government funding to the Council for ESOL provision available to the college to restore the ESOL classes and the outreach work threatened by the cuts in LSC funding.

11.11 Motion submitted by Councillor Lutfur Rahman supporting Mayors for Peace

Proposed: Councillor Lutfur Rahman

Seconded: Councillor Fazlul Haque

This Council:

Recognises the dangers to global peace and security posed by nuclear weapons proliferation.

Recognises the achievement of Mayors for Peace in coordinating more than 1700 town and cities in 122 countries to promote the total abolition of nuclear weapons and pursue a lasting peace in the world.

Resolves to join the dozens of other authorities in England and Wales who have pledged their support for Mayors for Peace.

11.12 Motion submitted by Councillor Mamun Rashid regarding spending cuts auction

Proposed: Councillor Mamun Rashid

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

1) This Council notes that

a) the amount of Government borrowing has had to increase both because of a bail out to prevent a total collapse of the banking system brought about by the irresponsible behaviour of overpaid bankers and to ensure that spending in the economy was maintained

b) Government policy on this has generally been in the right direction, although too little was done too late to prevent the serious downturn in the economy that is now producing rapidly rising unemployment

c) all three major parties seem to agree that, in the words of Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg, there will have to be "savage cuts" in government spending, presumably immediately the general election is over

d) both Labour and Tories are examining cuts of 10% or more in government spending and that local government will not be exempt from these drastic cuts

2) This Council believes that

a) such drastic cuts to the funding of local government in Tower Hamlets would have a devastating effect on the provision of education, care for the young and the elderly, on housing provision and maintenance and all the essential services provided by this Council

b) such drastic cuts in public spending are quite unnecessary for three reasons

* levels of public debt are not particularly high by historic or comparative standards

** taxes should be increased to raise revenue but only on those best able to pay increased taxes, ie those on high incomes and with multi-million pound bonuses

*** cuts can be made in public spending on absurdities such as the replacement for Trident now estimated to cost £130 billion and on ID cards

c) the Leader of the Council should write to all the major party leaders deploring the proposals to cut public spending drastically and expressing this Council's complete opposition to such cuts

11.13 Motion submitted by Councillor Abdul Munim regarding postal vote debacle

Proposed: Councillor Abdul Munim

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

1) This Council notes that

a) a recent council by-election won by Respect in Birmingham has been mired in controversy yet again because of irregularities in the postal vote

b) there is a further police investigation ongoing in Tower Hamlets regarding allegations of illegal interference in postal voting in this borough during the European elections this year

c) some political activists are boasting even now about how many postal votes they have sown up for their party for the forthcoming general and local elections

2) This Council believes that

a) the postal vote on demand system is fundamentally flawed

b) there is no evidence genuine voter participation in elections is increased using postal votes on demand in the longer term

c) the flaws in the postal vote on demand system cannot be overcome by tightening up regulations regarding registration, signatures, etc, because the fundamental flaw is that it effectively abolishes the secret ballot and therefore enables undue pressure to be brought on voters

d) the integrity of the electoral system can only be restored if the postal vote on demand is abolished

e) problems over voter participation in the elections are better addressed by considering extending voting time over two days and at weekends and increasing the number of polling stations

f) the postal vote should be retained, as in the status quo ante, for all those with a proven need for the postal vote due to disability or absence.