

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2010**

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

**Members Present:**

Councillor Helal Abbas	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Councillor Anwar Khan
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Rofique U Ahmed	Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor Shelina Aktar	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Anna Lynch
Councillor Tim Archer	Councillor Md. Maium Miah
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Mohammed Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Craig Aston	Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer
Councillor Lutfu Begum	Councillor Lesley Pavitt
Councillor Mizan Chaudhury	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor Lutfur Rahman
Councillor Zara Davis	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Gloria Thienel
Councillor Judith Gardiner	Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Carlo Gibbs	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Kosru Uddin
Councillor Carli Harper-Penman	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Councillor Ann Jackson	Councillor Amy Whitelock

**The Mayor, Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman, in the Chair**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Shafiqul Haque, Harun Miah and Joshua Peck.

**RESOLVED**

That the apologies 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
Kabir Ahmed	5.2.2	Personal	Deputation from residents in his ward
Khales Uddin Ahmed	5.1.1	Personal	Ward Councillor for Bromley by Bow
Ohid Ahmed	6.1	Personal	Ward Councillor, also Board member of Poplar Harca.
Craig Aston	10.2	Personal	Ward Councillor
Lutfu Begum	10.2	Personal	Ward Councillor
Stephanie Eaton	5.1.2	Personal	Relates to a property in my ward
David Edgar	5.1.2	Personal	I was on the Policy & Implementation Committee
David Edgar	10.2	Personal	I am a Limehouse Ward Councillor
Marc Francis	6.1	Personal	Member of the Board of Old Ford Housing Association
Denise Jones	5.1.1	Personal	Non-executive member of NHS Tower Hamlets PCT
Rania Khan	5.1.1	Personal	Ward Councillor and user of facility
Anna Lynch	5.2.2	Personal	Councillor for Weavers Ward
Mohammed Abdul Mukit MBE	5.2.2	Personal	Councillor for Weavers Ward
Helal Uddin	5.1.1	Personal	Linked to an organisation that is linked to Inside Out Health & Wellbeing. Also Ward Councillor for Bromley by Bow
Kosru Uddin	6.1	Personal	Board member of Poplar Harca

## 3. MINUTES

### RESOLVED

That the minutes of the ordinary Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010 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**

The Mayor reminded Members of his forthcoming Charity Ball to be held on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

**5. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS OR DEPUTATIONS**

**PETITIONS**

**5.1.1. Petition re: Closure of Inside Out Health & Wellbeing Ltd.**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Sapna Begum and Mr. Duncan Victorin addressed the meeting in support of the petition explaining what the centre provided to the local community. They then responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Rachael Saunders, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing thanked the Ms. Begum and Mr. Victorin for bringing the petition to her attention. Inside Out had applied for £90,000 grant funding for a three year period. Over thirty organisations applied for this limited funding stream, with scores applied in accordance with set criteria. Although Inside Out did not score highly against these criteria, Councillor Saunders stated that Councillor Khan had told her of the good service that was provided and that she and the Interim Corporate Director, Adults Health and Wellbeing would be happy to speak further with the petitioners and their Ward Councillors.

**RESOLVED**

That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Adults Health & Wellbeing for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

**5.1.2 Petition re: transfer of property at 63a Sewardstone Road, E2**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Ruth Allan addressed the meeting in support of the petition making reference to a briefing note that Members had received separately. She then responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor David Edgar, Lead Member Resources, said that the property had not been transferred to the Grand Union Co-op for a number of reasons, amongst which was a lengthy period of illegal occupation. The Council had recently informed the Co-op that due to the length of time that had passed and the substantial changes experienced in both policy and economic terms over that period, the Council wished to review the arrangements made in 2001, and intended to bring revised proposals regarding this property to Cabinet in the Autumn. The Council would fully explore any proposals from the Co-op.

**RESOLVED**

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

**DEPUTATIONS****5.2.1 Deputation re: publication of Council expenditure**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Mr. Neil King addressed the meeting on behalf of the deputation. He then responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor David Edgar, Lead Member, Resources, said that the Council was happy to publish the information and that this would be implemented from January 2011 in line with the Government's requirements.

**RESOLVED**

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

**Change to order of business**

At this point, Councillor Zara Davis **MOVED** and Councillor David Snowdon **SECONDED** – "That under Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be changed to allow item 11.2 to be considered as the next item of business."

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

**5.2.2 Deputation re: Tower Hamlets Core Strategy**

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Lucy Rogers and Mr. Mark Taylor addressed the meeting on behalf of the deputation. Ms. Rogers then responded to questions from Members of the Council.

Councillor Marc Francis, Lead Member, Housing, Heritage and Planning, thanked Ms. Rogers for bringing the deputation to the meeting. He noted that as reported elsewhere on the agenda for the meeting, the Tower Hamlets Local Development Core Strategy had been found 'sound' by the Planning Inspectorate. The Statement of Participation identified how residents and businesses were involved in the process.

Councillor Francis outlined how the LDF Core Strategy recognised and addressed the needs of the borough and its residents in relation to affordable housing, job creation, the effects of development, health and education.

Councillor Francis stated that the evening and night-time economy could contribute to the vibrancy and economic vitality of town centres. Policy SP01 would ensure such uses were not over-concentrated in areas where they would have a detrimental impact on local people. Councillor Francis did not consider that consultation was the problem, but rather that the members of the deputation had a fundamental difference of opinion with the authority in relation to policy.

### **RESOLVED**

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

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

### **6.1 Question from Mr. Ian Godfrey to the Lead Member for Housing, Heritage and Planning, Councillor Marc Francis**

“What reports or consultations were conducted into the need for shoppers’ parking at the Roman Road market in Bow, before the Council decided that the 140 space Safeway site car park could be sold off for private flats?”

#### **Response of the Lead Member, Councillor Marc Francis**

The scheme referred to in the question is for a mixed use development at the site of 2 Gladstone Place, and will comprise 208 residential units of which 62 will be affordable. The proposal will also include 2390sqm of food retail, 297sqm of non-food retail accommodation. The new supermarket will greatly improve the shopping offer in the area, attract more people to the Town Centre and further support the street market.

The 140 car parking spaces mentioned were originally intended for use by visitors to the previous Safeway store and granted planning permission according to the planning standards of the day. These standards were not required to address the levels of traffic congestion and related pollution in the vicinity of the site. Modern Council parking standards for new retail provision, however, do not allow for additional parking for retail units. This is in line with national, regional and Council policy. This planning application was accompanied, as it must be, by a transport assessment and this work was based on the current parking standards.

The applicants did not survey whether there was a need for retaining this level of shoppers parking as they did not need to do so. However, they did consider all the parking options available in the area and the good level of transport accessibility. While the retail development does not have to provide any parking spaces to meet the standard, it was considered by the applicant that 30 pay and display parking spaces would be provided for all visitors to the site and Roman Road market.

There was a great deal wrong with the council's handling of this issue, particularly its premature disposal of its leasehold interest in the site, but I'm afraid I do not agree that the reduction in car park spaces is one of them.

**Summary of supplementary question from Mr. Godfrey:**

Why are you going against the Council's Core Strategy for development? Principle number one for Bow states "Bow should be promoted as a place suitable for families with terraced housing that offers private back gardens", not high rise blocks.

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

I am not going to comment on a planning committee decision that has been made, but we need more affordable housing in this area and just as importantly, a new supermarket to deliver major benefits. There are 30,000 people living in Bow and this population can sustain both the market and a new supermarket.

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

**7.1 Question from Councillor Judith Gardiner to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Shiria Khatun**

"Can the Lead Member tell us how Tower Hamlets' students did in their GCSE and A-Level exams this year and how this compares to previous years?"

**Response of the Lead Member:**

Tower Hamlets students performed very well indeed in their GCSE and A-level exams this year, and I want to congratulate all of them, their parents, and their teachers. 99% of our young people got at least 1 GCSE, and the latest figures show that 75% got 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C. This is a huge improvement on last year's score of 66%. In addition, for the first time, more than half our young people – 51% - got 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C including English and maths. This is also a strong improvement on last year's figure of 46%. At A-level, the average 'point score' per pupil was 635.4 points, up a little from 631 points last year. The average score per exam entry was 204.9, a significant rise from 191.6 last year.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Judith Gardiner:**

Do you agree that this superb achievement reflects both the hard work of schools, teachers and parents and the excellent work done by this Council in addressing social disadvantage; and that it is a bit rich for a Government that are petrified of sending their children to state schools to be making cuts to benefits and education services for working people?

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

I totally agree with the sentiment. I am a product of a state school in Tower Hamlets and I send my children to state schools and I am proud of that.

**7.2 Question from Councillor Zara Davis to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Shiria Khatun**

"In the light of this year's A Level results in Tower Hamlets, which shows that the percentage of entries achieving an A grade is significantly below the national average, what measures are being taken by the Council and the schools and colleges in the borough to deliver a drastic improvement?"

**Response of the Lead Member:**

Our A-level results this year have improved on last year's, but we know there is still more to do. We are working with schools and with Tower Hamlets college to develop an improvement plan which promotes improved teaching and learning, better tracking and use of data and a wider course offer. We meet termly for 16-19 Planning and Review sessions which review performance and agree improvement priorities. We are also using data better to track areas of concern, and have widened the work of the School Improvement Partners (who have helped make a big difference to school results) to include an agreed focus on post-16 performance. As well as this, we have been expanding the provision in the borough, with the establishment of the Cambridge Heath Sixth Form, and plans developing for another sixth form collaborative in the east of the borough, which you should be proud of. George Green School has developed the very demanding International Baccalaureate curriculum for its sixth form; the first cohort completed this summer with some very pleasing results.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Zara Davis:**

This year we had 200 students who achieved A - A\*. If we had achieved the national average rate that figure would have been 400. We are trailing behind the rest of the country and this is holding back many students from getting into universities and top jobs. At Camden School for Girls more than half of their A Level entries get As and A\*s. That compares with just 15% in TH getting As and A\*s. Will you commit to working with the top schools in London and share the best practise with schools and colleges in Tower Hamlets?

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

Can't you be happy for those 200 children? We are extremely proud of these young people who have achieved such success. You mention Camden which is a Labour-run authority. If you are so interested in education, can I suggest that you consider mentoring as there are many local children who are keen to be coached in the core subjects.

**7.3 Question from Councillor Kosru Uddin to the Lead Member for Environment, Councillor Shahed Ali**

“How is Tower Hamlets moving towards being a greener borough and how are we performing against targets for recycling?”

**Response of the Lead Member:**

The Council is determined to make the borough ‘greener’ and this vision is being driven by the Community Plan, the LDF and our Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, which sets out how we aspire to introduce sustainable solutions in our parks, and open spaces. I am proud of a number of initiatives the Council has introduced for its own staff, including, increasing the opportunities of staff to cycle to and from work, but also utilising our pool bike system to travel around the borough.

Over the last two years recycling rates have more than doubled rising from 13% in 2007/08 to 26.5% in 2009/10. Initial indications are that this rate is higher than some of the traditionally higher performing boroughs in London such as Wandsworth and Westminster. We recently beat several local authorities from across England to win a National Recycling Award for the improvements to our recycling rates. The waste and recycling team have developed an annual plan to secure a 32% performance in the next financial year.

A large communication campaign is due to be launched in Autumn. The details of the campaign are being finalised. As part of our ongoing communication campaign, Mr Recycle More has been commissioned to attend several events this year.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Kosru Uddin:**

There are many new developments springing up. What are you proposing to do to ensure that suitable contracts are in place for waste collection and recycling?

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

Any new developments for the borough are agreed by the Development or Strategic Development Committee. From my side, I and the CLC officers ensure that all the correct information is available to the Committees to make the right decision in each case.

**7.4 Question from Councillor Gloria Thienel to the Lead Member for Housing, Heritage and Planning, Councillor Marc Francis**

“Will the Lead Member announce when the new lettings policy agreed at Cabinet in March 2010 will be implemented?”



**Response of the Lead Member:**

Can I thank Cllr Thienel for her question and giving me the opportunity to highlight this Labour council's important reforms to the Choice Based Lettings system.

As you well know, as councillors, we receive hundreds of enquiries and complaints from constituents who are trapped on the Housing Waiting List. While more new social housing is built here in Tower Hamlets than anywhere else in the country, there will always be a queue for social housing. It is therefore essential that the way that queue works enjoys the strongest possible support in the community.

As the 2007 scrutiny review of Choice Based Lettings made clear, it cannot be said that the current system achieves that objective.

In 2008, the Cabinet instructed officers to develop a new system, which gave more priority to overcrowded families and those who have waited longest for re-housing. We also asked that new systems be much more simple and transparent. That new system was consulted on last autumn and it enjoyed the overwhelming backing of the 2000 residents who responded.

As Cllr Thienel says, Cabinet agreed it in principle in March. In the months since then, officers have been developing an IT facility that could successfully support the new policy. Development work has progressed well and I am hoping to be able to confirm an implementation date in the next week or so. All being well, that date could be by the first week in October.

Whatever the actual date, I can assure Cllr Thienel and the rest of the Chamber, that all households on the waiting list will receive letters informing them of the changes and how they affect their individual circumstances.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Gloria Thienel:**

A resident of one of the estates in my ward asked when the new lettings policy would be implemented, I did a Member's enquiry and another resident asked and two different dates were given. Can the Lead Member assure me that all ALMOs will be given the information so that they can give the correct information to all residents?

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

Yes, I can assure you that the ALMO and all RSLs will have this information and in addition, the applicants themselves will all receive a letter informing them of the change and how it will affect their circumstances. I welcome the Conservative Group's support for this important development.

### 7.5 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan to the Lead Member for Community Safety, Councillor Abdal Ullah

“Can the Lead Member give an update on the various community safety initiatives taking place over the summer including the use of CCTV in Whitechapel and tell us how successful they have been so far?”

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

Traditionally there is a peak in reported incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour across the borough. The warmer weather and lighter nights encourages people to socialise in public open spaces for longer periods of time, often consuming alcohol. This year the council in partnership with the police has ensured that a significant resource has been put in place across the summer months to patrol parks and open spaces and the town centres.

The introduction of the Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEOs) has for the first time provided the council with a flexible and resilient resource, able to be deployed directly to deal with anti-social behaviour concerns raised by the community. During the summer months the officers have been able to provide reassuring presence in parks and open spaces, patrol on foot in stairwells and support the police to effectively manage the night-time economy in the town centres.

There have been a large number of community safety initiatives over the summer period, including the activities under Tower Hamlets Safer Together campaign. It would not be possible to mention all the activities that have taken place as there are so many. Below are some of the highlights which we will draw attention to: -

#### **CCTV**

CCTV is a very effective tool which is constantly used across the borough. The resource provides vital support to operational police and council staff. The CCTV control room is a valuable resource, providing support and best evidence to ensure activity undertaken maximises the effectiveness of resources. Throughout the summer period staff in the CCTV control room support various operations, providing 24hour support. As appropriate council staff were supported by police officers, for example Operation Mercer; providing a police focus on night-time economy related issues, co-ordinating the various activities taking part in the E1 area. Liaison with THEO's, Police, Parking Enforcement, Local Environment Team and Market Officers was carried out by phone and radio through the CCTV Control Room. The dedicated resource allowed us to concentrate on certain areas and initiate the relevant response to the problem. During the operation, officers dealt with issues concerning thefts, assaults, public order offences, urinating in the street and illegal street trading. The use of CCTV ensures that incidents are able to be identified, evidence recorded and the appropriate response directed to deal with the incidents.

In relation to the Whitechapel area specifically, over July and August our CCTV has assisted the Police in 89 incidents in LAP 1, 137 incidents in LAP 2 and 74 incidents in LAP 3.

In terms of actual arrests, there were 190 arrests over the three months which were down to the CCTV Control Room monitoring activity on the street and informing the police.

### **Operation Stairwell**

Operation Stairwell is a zero tolerance approach operation targeting ASB in stairwells across housing estates in Tower Hamlets. It was undertaken by Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers along with the Police Joint Enforcement Team. Patrol locations are identified through intelligence.

Results from 5<sup>th</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> September include: -

- 157 alcohol seizures
- 147 warnings
- 19 warning letters
- 10 arrests

### **Operation Heat Wave**

Operation Heat Wave targets ASB in parks and open spaces across the borough. Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers along with the Police Joint Enforcement Team patrol locations identified through intelligence.

Results from 5<sup>th</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> September include: -

- 177 intelligence reports gathered
- 82 uses of Community Safety Accreditation Service (CSAS) anti-social behaviour powers
- 8 prosecutions
- 4 tobacco seizures

### **Operation Beggar**

Targeted intervention work to support vulnerable adults into supportive treatment programmes. Drug Outreach Workers and Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers patrolled locations across the borough and offering support services to individuals, before they are moved on by enforcement officers. Officers attended locations to address street drinking/rough sleeping and ASB at these locations.

The aim of Operation Beggar was to crack down on antisocial behaviour within the borough and help support individuals away from their street-based lifestyle. Activities for the Operation are outlined below:

- Individuals were engaged at various sites across the borough and were offered support services before being moved on by enforcement officers.
- Beggars accepted support for drug and alcohol related problems and will now receive help and treatment advice for their addictions
- Officers also attended Cambridge Health Road Train Station to respond to members enquires regarding street drinking /rough sleeping and ASB at this area.

It is planned that this operation will continue to ensure a lasting effect, which should discourage begging and antisocial behaviour on the borough's streets.

### **Operation Mercer**

This partnership initiative took place within Whitechapel & Brick Lane town centre, focusing on the night-time economy & alcohol related ASB. 40 Police officers along with the partnership conducted operations, as a result of which:

Licensed mini-cabs were targeted by officers from the Whitechapel Town Centre Team working alongside the Joint Enforcement Team. This activity included ensuring vehicles were properly insured, drivers correctly registered and detecting unpaid court fines from Number Plate Recognition. Results from this operation are outlined below:

- Court fines - £1,300 to be recovered
- Fines – a car with outstanding fines of £1,233 was seized
- 3 people being investigated for benefit fraud

### **Operation Fusion**

Partnership working between the Council and Police, including THEOs, Drug Outreach workers and Police patrolling. Licensing and Police worked together to detect offences. Information and literature was given out to the public. Officers engaged with youth at Mile End Park and Climbing Centre

Results included: -

- 8 arrests
- 50 stop and searches
- 64 stop and accounts
- 5 weapons sweeps
- 398 public surveys completed, which were generally supportive of the operation

### **Operation Cork**

Operation Cork was an activity targeting on & off-licensed premises across the borough including food premises, to identify premises responsible for fuelling alcohol related ASB. Police and Licensing officers targeted premises.

Activities included: -

- Premises were closed
- Warnings issued
- Licence checks conducted
- Legal action taken
- Test purchases conducted

The operations organised across the summer demonstrate the effective partnership between the council and the police. The introduction of the Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEOs) has provided the council with an effective resource to respond to concerns of anti-social behaviour, whilst freeing the police to deal with the more serious crime. The police have

provided the THEOs with additional powers under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme which has equipped them to respond effectively. In addition the officers are able to enforce council legislation and bye laws. For example until the introduction of the THEOs, there have been no council convictions for breach of bye laws for urinating in the street. The THEOs have been deployed daily across the summer period from 0800 hours to 0200 hours. They have provided a highly visible presence on the streets which has no doubt contributed to deterring crime and providing reassurance to the community, often preventing incidents from taking place and preventing people becoming the victims of crime.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Aminur Khan:**

How have residents been consulted on these initiatives?

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

There has been good consultation and 'before and after' exercises in each case. I have seen a significant improvement in my area and since Cllr Khan has been a Councillor he has been championing for CCTV. I can announce that his ward will next week be the first to receive the Council's new 3G wi-fi technology.

- 7.6 **Question from Councillor Peter Golds to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck** (Councillor David Edgar, Lead Member for Resources, responded to this question in Cllr Peck's absence)

"Does the CCTV facility within the council chamber have a 'record' programme?"

**Response of Lead Members' response (Cllr David Edgar):**

The CCTV equipment in the Chamber does have a recording capability, but this is not turned on. The camera is only used for sending pictures to room C1 during meetings for any overspill audiences. There is in place a protocol that prohibits the recording of Council meetings by officers and the public.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Peter Golds:**

I find that a fascinating answer. Other Councils put their meetings on YouTube. I have met the Company that installed our equipment and we have the most expensive facility, including a CD record function. Yet we have previously been told there are no recording facilities. Now we are told that there are protocols, but other Boroughs, the GLA and Westminster do webcast their meetings - why not Tower Hamlets?

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

I cannot comment on answers you have previously received. I believe it would be sensible for us to give consideration to whether we should broadcast the Council's proceedings in this way.

**7.7 Question from Councillor Amy Whitelock to the Lead Member for Housing, Heritage and Planning, Councillor Marc Francis**

"What are the likely effects on the residents of Tower Hamlets of the Coalition Government's proposed cut to Housing Benefit and their comments about ending lifetime tenancies?"

**Response of the Lead Member:**

Can I thank Councillor Whitelock for raising this important issue.

We all know there are abuses of the Housing Benefit system and, I'm sure we all support decisive action to tackle those abuses. What Labour councillors on this side of the Chamber do not support is the kind of arbitrary slash and burn through people's benefits being conducted by an ideologically-driven Tory Chancellor and a theologically-drive Secretary of State for Work & Pensions.

This Council's analysis suggests that around 1,000 households in the private rented sector will find themselves having to make up a benefit shortfall as a result of the introduction of the caps next spring. Some of those shortfalls will be so great as to leave families and vulnerable single people in rent arrears and facing eviction and homelessness. It is just the start of things that the Conservative Government are introducing with the cuts.

The re-calculation of Local Housing Allowance from the 50 percentile to the 30 percentile of rents locally, which is due to come into effect in October 2011, will then increase those benefit shortfalls and draw more people into that situation.

The decision to increase the LHA in line with inflation rather than rent levels will further erode its value and leave tenants facing even greater shortfalls.

The withdrawal of the LHA top-up for those living in cheaper private rented housing will affect another 1,000 or so households.

The backdated uprating of the Non-Dependent Deductions from next April will also affect thousands of social tenants whose twenty- and thirty-something children are still at home with Mum and Dad waiting for a move to a place of their own and the proposed withdrawal of 10 per cent of Housing Benefit for those JSA claimants who have been out of work for more than 12 months will affect thousands more social tenants.

The extension of the caps to the level of Housing Benefit subsidy available to house homeless people in temporary accommodation is estimated to be at least £1 million.

The private sector has contributed to our successes in homelessness prevention and dealing with overcrowding.

If that sector becomes unaffordable, such opportunities will diminish significantly. Indeed, that sector may be the source of homelessness if landlords are unable to sustain tenancies at lower rent levels. At this stage, the overall cost of these cuts is unquantifiable.

But it is safe to say, they will be absolutely devastating to those who rely on Housing Benefit.

**Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Amy Whitelock:**

In relation to the security of Council tenancy, I was contacted by a distressed local resident when she became aware of the prime Minister's comments. Does the Lead Member agree that the Government has no democratic mandate for this, especially as David Cameron dismissed our warnings on the matter as scaremongering? Could the Lead Member assure me that he will do everything possible to oppose the Government's proposals?

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

I give this assurance and can I apologise for getting so carried away describing the appalling cuts to Housing Benefit that I did not have time to mention David Cameron's even more pernicious plans to scrap Secure and Assured Tenancies. Security of Tenure is not a luxury, it is a necessity.

London's first ever council housing was built on the Boundary Estate here in Tower Hamlets. In more than a hundred years since then, council and housing association tenancies have given millions of families the stable and affordable home within which to raise their children, and safeguarded millions more older people in their retirement.

David Cameron's plan to force tenants out of their homes after five or ten years appears to be especially targeted at pensioners who have a spare bedroom.

We fully support the payment of financial incentives to encourage under-occupying tenants to move somewhere smaller and free up homes for young families. But older people should never be driven out of their homes.

The Tories don't have a majority in Parliament to drive these changes through. It's up to us here in the East End – the birthplace of council housing - to stand up for the principle of Security of Tenure and give confidence to MPs to stop its abolition. That's why Labour's candidate to be the Mayor of Tower Hamlets is today launching a petition against the Prime Minister's attempt to water down tenants' rights.

### **7.8 Question from Councillor David Snowdon to the Lead Member for Culture & Creative Industries, Councillor Denise Jones**

“Will the Lead Member please outline the council's current position on replacing the Isle of Dogs library with an Ideas Store or Ideas Store Local/Metro, and how far this plan has progressed?”

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

##### **The Idea Store Strategy 2009**

The future framework for Idea Stores and libraries is contained in the Idea Store Strategy 2009, which was adopted by Cabinet in July 2009. This updated the original Idea Store Strategy which had been in place for ten years. It presents an updated model for the provision of library and lifelong learning services through the Borough's Idea Stores and Libraries and makes a case for increased efficiencies across the Council by co-locating other services within appropriately located Idea Stores ('Local').

The key objectives of the updated strategy are as follows:

- Improve the quality of core library and information services
- Improve the quality and scope of core adult learning services
- Expand the provision of high quality health information, advice and support
- Expand the provision of high quality employment information, advice and support
- Improve the provision of high quality, accessible ICT/ILT infrastructure, services, training and support
- Strengthen inclusion and accessibility
- Co-locate cultural, leisure, and other council services where this will increase efficiency, effectiveness and value for money and enhance the Idea Store offer

##### **Future Plans for the Isle of Dogs**

There are no plans currently being developed that will affect Cubitt Town Library; however, should this change at any time in the future there would of course be extensive public consultation.

##### **Summary of supplementary question from Councillor David Snowdon:**

The Isle of Dogs library is still a library and not an Idea Store, but there seem to be fewer books now than before. Would the Lead Member like to comment on whether some have been removed?

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

The books are likely to be out on loan to users. I would like to inform you that the satisfaction amongst users is 88% so people recognise that this is a good service. The loan figure for Cubitt Town library is 69,632 and for Whitechapel



Idea Store 704,500 so this shows that people are using the library. Future plans do not include reducing the number of books and lending levels are up.

### **7.9 Question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury to the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Rachael Saunders**

“Can the Lead Member explain what steps the Council has recently taken to tackle the high levels of childhood obesity in the Borough?”

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

I recognise the importance of dealing with childhood obesity in the borough. The latest figures show that significant progress has been made at reception age (4-5yrs) old where the trend is now downwards whereas at Year 6 (age 10-11) we still have an upward trend. In close partnership with the NHS we are targeting a major effort at reducing obesity in that age group. Proposals are currently being developed to weigh and measure children in Years 4 and 5 so those most at risk of becoming obese can be identified and effectively directed towards weight management interventions. We are keen to ensure the whole family is engaged in this process. The intervention could be school-based sessions and signposting to other relevant services or a longer weight management programme at a local leisure centre. For all children and young people, we are increasing levels of physical activity through extra sports, play and after schools sessions.

How young people travel to and from school is also important and we are encouraging more walking and cycling. The next ‘walk to school month’ is in October with an event in Mile End Park on the 12<sup>th</sup>. We are also working with parents to encourage greater awareness of the need for our young people to get the recommended 60 minutes exercise each day as well as increasing the understanding of what a healthy diet should be for primary school children. The Healthy Lives Team work closely with schools to promote healthy behaviour, including supporting schools to develop healthy packed lunch guidance. We also continue to provide an excellent, nationally recognised, school meals service, who ensure healthy meals are served in schools, in line with School Food Trust guidance.

Finally, through our Healthy Borough programme, we are delivering a range of projects that aim to make the borough a healthier environment in which it is easier for everyone, children included, to maintain a healthy weight throughout life.

#### **Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury:**

Will you agree that we need to do something about the proliferation of chicken shops in the borough?

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

I hope when the Core Strategy is agreed we can use that to deal with the saturation of fast food outlets and I look forward to working with colleagues on this.

In accordance with Rule 12.10 (expiry of time limit), questions 7.10 – 7.19 were not put. Written responses would be forwarded to the questioners.

**8. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES****8.1 LDF Core Strategy: Adoption of the Plan**

The report of the Cabinet meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September was tabled.

Councillor Marc Francis **MOVED** and Councillor Helal Abbas **SECONDED** - "That the recommendations in the report circulated with the agenda be agreed."

Following discussion, the recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Council note the Inspector's Report and Annexes and the tabled report of the Cabinet meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September; and
2. That the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (including the Inspector's required amendments) be adopted to be a part of the borough's Development Plan.

**8.2 Review of the Constitution: Recommendations of the Constitution Working Party**

Councillor Helal Abbas **MOVED** and Councillor David Edgar **SECONDED** – "That the item be withdrawn for further work and consultation to be carried out prior to re-submission to the Council meeting to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010."

**RESOLVED**

That the report of the Constitution Working Party be withdrawn for further work and consultation to be carried out prior to re-submission to the Council meeting to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

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

There was no business to be considered under this heading.

## 10. OTHER BUSINESS

### 10.1 London Local Authorities (Travel Concessions) Bill

The Chief Executive informed Members that the Council had been contacted by London Councils advising that following discussions between the Mayor of London, TfL and London Councils that there was now a need for further dialogue on this matter. He therefore asked that the Council agree to adjourn consideration of the report until the next meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

The Mayor asked if Members agreed to this adjournment of consideration. On being put to the vote, this was **agreed**.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Council adjourn consideration of the report until the next meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

### 10.2 Local Government Ombudsman findings against the Council

Councillor Marc Francis **MOVED** and Councillor Helal Abbas **SECONDED** – “That the recommendations set out in the report be agreed.”

The recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**, with no Member voting against, Accordingly it was:-

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the report and the findings of maladministration against the Authority by the Local Government Ombudsman in respect of the investigation attached to the report to the Strategic Development Committee of the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009 be noted.
2. That the Authority accepts the recommendations in full and instructs officers to make the relevant payments of compensation to the complainant and to instruct independent valuers to carry out the comparative valuation set out in the Ombudsman's report.

**11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL****11.1 Motion proposed by Councillor Tim Archer regarding the Henry Moore sculpture**

The motion as printed in the agenda was **MOVED** by Councillor Tim Archer and **SECONDED** by Councillor Peter Golds.

Councillor Archer tabled a letter from the Canary Wharf Group confirming that the Group would be prepared in principle to provide a site for the statue and pay the cost of its relocation, which would therefore be facilitated at no cost to the authority.

Councillor Denise Jones **MOVED** and Councillor Anwar Khan **SECONDED** a tabled **AMENDMENT** to the motion as follows:

“Delete all and replace with

This Council notes that:

- The original Henry Moore sculpture entitled Draped Seated Woman that was gifted to the borough on the demise of the GLC is currently housed in the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield, a 400 mile round trip from Tower Hamlets. Due to development of the site where it was situated in the borough it was loaned to the Sculpture Park who restored it from graffiti, paint and scratches and insured it at their cost. It has remained on display in the Yorkshire since that time.

This Council believes that:

- Local residents should be able to enjoy and benefit from our cultural heritage and the sculpture should not be sold.

This Council resolves:

- To ask officers to:
- explore options and the costs for safely relocating the Henry Moore sculpture back in Tower Hamlets, including consulting with Canary Wharf Group about the possibility of temporarily relocating the sculpture to the Canary Wharf estate on loan where it could be put on public display, and finding possible sites in other parts of the borough including Victoria Park or Mile End Park where it could be relocated at a later date.
- To ensure that the Council does not bear any of the immediate or long term costs involved with a potential relocation, including moving the sculpture, maintenance, insurance and security and that all other potential funding options are explored.
- ask English Heritage to list the sculpture.”

At this point, Councillor Lutfur Rahman **MOVED** and Councillor Ohid Ahmed **SECONDED** – “That under paragraph 15.11.4 the question be now put.”

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

The amendment moved by Councillor Denise Jones was put to the vote and was **agreed**, with no Member voting against.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was **agreed** with no Member voting against. Accordingly it was:-

### **RESOLVED**

This Council notes that:

- The original Henry Moore sculpture entitled Draped Seated Woman that was gifted to the borough on the demise of the GLC is currently housed in the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield, a 400 mile round trip from Tower Hamlets. Due to development of the site where it was situated in the borough it was loaned to the Sculpture Park who restored it from graffiti, paint and scratches and insured it at their cost. It has remained on display in the Yorkshire since that time.

This Council believes that:

- Local residents should be able to enjoy and benefit from our cultural heritage and the sculpture should not be sold.

This Council resolves:

- To ask officers to:
  - explore options and the costs for safely relocating the Henry Moore sculpture back in Tower Hamlets, including consulting with Canary Wharf Group about the possibility of temporarily relocating the sculpture to the Canary Wharf estate on loan where it could be put on public display, and finding possible sites in other parts of the borough including Victoria Park or Mile End Park where it could be relocated at a later date.
- To ensure that the Council does not bear any of the immediate or long term costs involved with a potential relocation, including moving the sculpture, maintenance, insurance and security and that all other potential funding options are explored.
- ask English Heritage to list the sculpture.

### 11.2 Motion proposed by Councillor Zara Davis regarding publication of Council expenditure

The motion as printed in the agenda was **MOVED** by Councillor Zara Davis and **SECONDED** by Councillor David Snowdon.

Councillor David Edgar **MOVED**, and Councillor Helal Abbas **SECONDED**, a tabled **AMENDMENT** to the motion as follows:

“**Add** the following points to the “Council notes” section:

- The Government set out its intention in the summer to issue a draft Code of Practice on payments over £500 in September for consultation followed by a final Code of Practice in November so that councils are able to publish this information in January 2011.
- Draft Local Spending Data Guidance on publishing this data was issued on 10 September and this guidance is expected to be revised in six month’s time. Councils are expected to publish data to the minimum standards within six months of the publication of the guidance.

**Replace** the first bullet point of the “Council resolves” section with:

- To publish details of all Council expenditure above £500 on the Tower Hamlets website from January 2011.”

At this point, Councillor Alibor Choudhury **MOVED** and Councillor Lutfur Rahman **SECONDED** – “That under paragraph 15.11.4 the question be now put.”

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

The amendment moved by Councillor David Edgar was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was **agreed** with no Member voting against. Accordingly it was:-

### **RESOLVED**

This Council notes:

- The Government will soon require all councils to publish expenditure above £500;
- Many councils across London including Islington, Wandsworth, Hammersmith & Fulham and Richmond Councils are already publishing all payments over £500.
- The Government set out its intention in the summer to issue a draft Code of Practice on payments over £500 in September for consultation followed by a final Code of Practice in November so that councils are able to publish this information in January 2011.

- Draft Local Spending Data Guidance on publishing this data was issued on 10 September and this guidance is expected to be revised in six month's time. Councils are expected to publish data to the minimum standards within six months of the publication of the guidance.

This Council believes:

- That residents have a right to know how the Council is spending taxpayers' money and to be able to access this information quickly and easily;
- That in this time of financial restraint, residents can play a key role as armchair auditors helping the Council to find savings;
- That publishing our expenditure as soon as possible will ensure maximum openness, enable savings to be found now and improve our accountability to residents in Tower Hamlets.

This Council resolves:

- To publish details of all Council expenditure above £500 on the Tower Hamlets website from January 2011
- To update this data on the website every month.

The meeting ended at 9.32 p.m.

Chair,  
Council