

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2018

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Shiria Khatun
- Councillor Abjol Miah
- Councillor Gulam Robbani

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Monitoring Officer advised that she had granted two dispensations in respect of Agenda Items 7, Administration Motion regarding Housing in Tower Hamlets and 12.16 Motion regarding Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets for Residents. As a result of this, Councillors with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in these items did not need to declare this and would be able to stay in the meeting room, participate in the discussion and vote on these items.

The Monitoring Officer had also received notification from Councillor Rabina Khan that she had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following agenda items:

- 9.7, Member Question relating to new and small businesses.
- 9.31, Member Question relating to the Council Tax Reduction scheme and the self - employed.
- 12.2, Motion regarding stop the cut to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- 12.7, Motion regarding the Council Tax Reduction scheme.

Councillors Mahbub Alam, Shah Alam, Ohid Ahmed, Shafi Ahmed, Aminur Khan, Peter Golds and Denise Jones declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following agenda Items:

- 9.7, Member Question relating to new and small businesses.
- 9.31, Member Question relating to the Council Tax Reduction scheme and the self - employed.
- 12.2, Motion regarding Stop the cut to the Council Tax reduction scheme.
- 12.7, Motion regarding the Council Tax Reduction scheme.

Councillor Ayas Miah declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following agenda Items:

- 7, Administration Motion regarding Housing in Tower Hamlets.
- 9.7, Member Question relating to new and small businesses.

- 9.31, Member Question relating to the Council Tax Reduction scheme and the self - employed.
- 12.2, Motion regarding stop the cut to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- 12.7, Motion regarding the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- 12.16, Motion regarding Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets for Residents.

Councillor Rajib Ahmed declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following agenda items:

- 9.16, Member Question relating to the Council Tax Reduction scheme and mini cab drivers.
- 12.2, Motion regarding stop the cut to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.

Councillors Dave Chesterton and Helal Uddin declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in the following agenda Items:

- 7, Administration Motion regarding Housing in Tower Hamlets
- 12.16 Motion regarding Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets for Residents

Councillor Helal Uddin also declared a non - disclosable interest in agenda item 12.16.

Councillor John Pierce declared a non - disclosable interest in agenda item 5.2, Petition regarding Galleon House fire safety.

Councillor Oliur Rahman declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 12.18, Motion regarding the Public Sector Pay Cap – including Tower Hamlets staff and emergency workers

Councillor Harun Miah declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following agenda items:

- 9.20, a Member Question relating to traffic and road safety measures
- 7, Administration Motion regarding Housing in Tower Hamlets
- 12.16 Motion regarding Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets for Residents

Members declaring Disclosable Pecuniary Interests would be required to leave the room for the duration of the relevant agenda items with the exception of those Members who had been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer in respect of items agenda 7 and 12.16.

3. MINUTES**DECISION:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 22 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

(Action by: Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services)

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There were no announcements.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**5.1 Petition regarding Latham House fire safety**

Councillor Oliur Rahman addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION:

1. That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

(Action by: Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place).

5.2 Petition regarding Galleon House fire safety

Nasim Ahmed addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Sirajul Islam Cabinet Member for Housing then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION:

1. That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

(Action by: Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place).

5.3 Petition regarding for water sprinklers at Anglia House, Salmon Lane E14

Dipu Jagirdar and others addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Sirajul Islam, Cabinet Member for Housing then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION:

1. That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

(**Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place).

5.4 Petition regarding Campaign for Outdoor Gym in Sir John McDougal Park, Westferry Road, E14

Petition not presented due to the absence of the petitioner.

DECISION:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Childrens for a written response within 28 days.

(**Action by:** Debbie Jones, Corporate Director, Children).

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented his tabled report to the Council. The Leaders of the respective political groups then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE**Administration Motion regarding Housing in Tower Hamlets**

Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved** and Councillor Rachel Blake **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Oliur Rahman **moved** and Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim **seconded** the following amendment to the motion as **tabled**:

Additions in bold and deletions struck through:

This Council notes that:

1. The population of Tower Hamlets has broken through the 300,000 mark. It is predicted there will be a further 87,400 people living in the Borough over the next 25 years.
2. A lack of **genuinely** affordable housing is now the main concern for residents, as highlighted by the Annual Residents Survey 2017.
3. Since **the 2010 General Election**, rough sleeping has more than doubled and the number of homeless households has increased by half to almost 60,000. This is a direct result of the Government's failed housing policies: no proper investment for affordable homes; benefit changes; reduced funding for homelessness services, and a lack of action to help private renters.

4. The Government announced in its Autumn Budget that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) cap would be lifted for some councils, up to £1bn, starting in 2019/20, but that councils will need to bid for this in the future rather than automatically being given the power now.
5. The new Local Plan will **must** set out how the Council intends to manage the scale and pace of development and ensure that all residents benefit from the opportunities growth brings to the borough and will deliver more schools, transport, GP surgeries and jobs alongside new housing. **The Plan must ensure that it does not have a funding gap and ensures a fair, transparent and accountable distribution of local infrastructure levy and any development related funding is fairly distributed to all parts of the Borough – particularly the areas and neighbourhoods which are more deprived, poorer or those with the highest levels of child poverty and other needs.**
6. Mayor Biggs pledged to deliver 1,000 council homes and the Council is on track to meet this target. **However, Council considers that the current target is without any meaningful timescale, transparency and accountability and is not only unimaginative, lacks ambition and essential details but is also a poor attempt to steal the credit for the hard work already carried out by the previous administration led by former Mayor Lutfur Rahman, former Deputy Mayor Councillor Ohid Ahmed and the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Alibor Choudhury and their team.**
7. Council figures show Tower Hamlets delivered 1,070 affordable homes last year (2016/17) and another 1,073 the year before (2015/16) **all of which were approved by the previous administration.**
8. Under Mayor Biggs' new Living Rent policy, rents for new affordable homes are far more affordable to those on low incomes, saving residents up to £6,000 a year. This was a recommendation of the Tower Hamlets Affordability Commission, which was set up by Mayor Biggs in 2015 following his election. **However, Council considers that Mayor John Biggs did not need to spend taxpayers' money to set up a 'Commission' to figure out that the Council should make the rents more affordable. The lowering of some of the rents is also partly due to the imposition of a government requirement to cut social housing rent by 1% a year for four years.**
9. That Mayor Biggs unveiled 148 new council homes at Watts Grove in September; a scheme which was scrapped in 2013 by the previous administration but reinstated after a local Labour-led campaign to save the housing. ~~The housing is covered by new rent levels, introduced by Mayor Biggs, which means that compared to the previous Mayor's rent levels, a family living in a new three bed property will be up to £5,791 better off. However Council believes that this had been approved by the previous administration at Cabinet on 5 November 2014 as~~

shown on the Council website and that it is highly irresponsible for the current administration to claim otherwise. In its lazy and politically convenient manner, The Biggs Administration tries to claim its credit otherwise without listing the full facts which were that:

- a. The previous administration paused on the first draft of the scheme in 2013 because it wanted to secure better value for money, secure additional funding and push for more affordable and Council housing.
 - b. The Biggs' Administration also fails to understand that the initial delay was to secure a grant of £7 million from the Greater London Authority to provide 150 homes but at a "significantly lower cost to the Council". In fact the previous administration achieved these objectives and delivered £26.33 funding to build Watts Grove Homes saving the Council millions, securing best value for money and providing much needed homes for local people.
10. The Mayor's Neighbourhood Refresh scheme will invest £3million in local neighbourhoods to make them safer, cleaner and greener. Practical improvements such as new lighting, more green space, traffic calming and new bins will make a positive difference to local areas **is a positive step in the right direction in principle but two years too late.**
 11. The rights of private renters in Tower Hamlets are being protected with the launch of the Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter. This, alongside innovative new measures such as the landlord licensing scheme, means a better deal for private renters. **However, Council notes that this was a project that begun under the previous Mayor Rahman Administration.**
 12. The Government's housing policies such as the benefit cap and bedroom tax, **along with local failures by the current administration**, have led to the total number of households in temporary accommodation – including bed and breakfast style housing, hostels, women's refuges and housing leased from private landlords – increasing by 55% from 50,400 in 2010 to 78,180 in 2017.
 13. Families are no longer housed in B&B accommodation for longer than the 6 week legal limit, ~~compared to the 174 families that were left to languish in B&Bs under the previous administration.~~ **However, Council considers that the current Mayor's lack of leadership and failures, mean that many families, out of nearly 19,000 on the housing waiting list, are primarily being bused out of the Borough or put in inadequate accommodation. Council also notes that it was the previous Labour Administration which sold Tower Hamlets housing stock to RSLs which was a catastrophic decision – ironically some of those properties which were sold by Labour are**

now being bought back by Mayor John Biggs using £60 million of taxpayers' money (despite some of these being not fit for purpose or provide value for money) – as part of £119m decision which the Biggs Administration sneaked through the full council meeting without any meaningful or a proper debate.

14. The Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which ensures transparency in the planning process and encourages reviewing viability at each phase of large schemes, aims to provide greater clarity to both applicants and the public and ensures that the principles of sustainable development are at the forefront of decision-making in Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

1. Population growth will bring Tower Hamlets numerous benefits as well as challenges **that the previous administration was working hard to plan ahead and tackle proactively.**
2. The Borough benefits **when** ~~from the approach of this Council Administration which~~ **proactively** is meeting the challenge of the housing crisis head on by providing high quality affordable housing, a better deal for private renters, improved local environments and ~~1,000~~ **and more council homes, as was the case under the previous administration.**
3. ~~The 174 families left to live in B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks, and their original decision to scrap the Watts Grove development, illustrates the approach of the previous administration: a failure to serve residents; a failure to properly manage council budgets; and a failure to plan for the future.~~
4. The Government's HRA cap proposals **are neither adequate nor do not** go far enough – borrowing caps should be lifted significantly higher, and not limited to a bidding process **and the local authorities provided with appropriate flexibility to deliver for communities they serve.**

The Council believes:

1. The former Mayor Lutfur Rahman's administration, supported by Deputy Mayor Ohid Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources, Alibor Choudhury and their team, embarked on an ambitious journey to tackle the housing issues including by:
 - a. Dealing with the poor standards of maintenance and upkeep within the private sector introducing 'licensing for private rented sector housing'.
 - b. Delivering a record 5,590 affordable homes (as confirmed by the Department of Communities and Local Government), the highest in the Country.

- c. **Securing the release of £53 million in New Homes Bonus by 2015 – again the highest in the Country. An achievement acknowledged in a recent report by City Hall.**
- d. **A number of regeneration projects such as the London Docks project which helped to secure a space for a 1,500 strong secondary school in Wapping.**
- e. **Other major regeneration schemes, led by Councillor Ohid Ahmed included the Ocean Estate and Blackwall Reach/Robin Hood Gardens.**
- f. **Developing the Whitechapel Vision - along with its Master Plan, which was the brainchild of the former Mayor and his Cabinet Member for Finance/Resources Cllr Alibor Choudhury – that included support for local businesses, a ‘tech city’ and the expansion of medical research facilities. The historic regeneration of Whitechapel is a testament to their commitment and ambition to improve the Borough.**
- g. **The Whitechapel Vision, its Master Plan and associated regeneration will also provide: at least 3,500 new homes; 5,000 new local jobs; school improvements; transformed public spaces; enhanced local heritage; and a new civic centre at the heart of the community.**

- 2 **The leadership and achievements of the Rahman Administration’s policies and delivery between 2010 and 2015 were recognised by Government and commentators across the UK.**

This Council resolves:

1. **That Mayor John Biggs should stop taking the credit for the achievements of the previous administration led by former Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Deputy Mayor Cllr Ohid Ahmed and the team. Instead he must learn to take responsibility for a series of catastrophic failures under his watch, instead of indulging in lazy and politically convenient point scoring and excuses.**
2. **To acknowledge the historic achievements of the former Mayor, former Deputy Mayor and their administration in delivering the record level of affordable housing as acknowledged by the Government, the GLA and others.**
3. **~~For to work with The Biggs Administration Mayor John Biggs to~~ work with all groups including the largest opposition, Independent Group (and its mayoral candidate, former Deputy Mayor Councillor Ohid Ahmed) to continue to work to deliver more affordable and social housing for local people.**
4. **~~For To support Mayor Biggs The Biggs Administration to~~ work with all parties and stakeholders to campaign to lift the HRA cap significantly and immediately, to ensure that councils including Tower**

Hamlets can provide the good quality social housing that is so badly needed.

5. ~~For To Mayor John Biggs~~ **The Biggs Administration to work with everyone in the interest of residents, on a cross-party basis, to lobby** support Mayor Biggs in his campaign to make sure that the Government does not to impose High Value Sales on Local Authorities.

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

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

DECISION:

This Council notes that:

1. The population of Tower Hamlets has broken through the 300,000 mark. It is predicted there will be a further 87,400 people living in the Borough over the next 25 years.
2. A lack of affordable housing is now the main concern for residents, as highlighted by the Annual Residents Survey 2017.
3. Since 2010 rough sleeping has more than doubled and the number of homeless households has increased by half to almost 60,000. This is a direct result of the Government's failed housing policies: no proper investment for affordable homes; benefit changes; reduced funding for homelessness services, and a lack of action to help private renters.
4. The Government announced in its Autumn Budget that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) cap would be lifted for some councils, up to £1bn, starting in 2019/20, but that councils will need to bid for this in the future rather than automatically being given the power now.
5. The new Local Plan will set out how the Council intends to manage the scale and pace of development and ensure that all residents benefit from the opportunities growth brings to the borough and will deliver more schools, transport, GP surgeries and jobs alongside new housing.
6. Mayor Biggs pledged to deliver 1,000 council homes and the Council is on track to meet this target.
7. Council figures show Tower Hamlets delivered 1,070 affordable homes last year (2016/17) and another 1,073 the year before (2015/16).
8. Under Mayor Biggs' new Living Rent policy, rents for new affordable homes are far more affordable to those on low incomes, saving residents up to £6,000 a year. This was a recommendation of the

Tower Hamlets Affordability Commission, which was set up by Mayor Biggs in 2015 following his election.

9. That Mayor Biggs unveiled 148 new council homes at Watts Grove in September; a scheme which was scrapped in 2013 by the previous administration but reinstated after a local Labour-led campaign to save the housing. The housing is covered by new rent levels, introduced by Mayor Biggs, which means that compared to the previous Mayor's rent levels, a family living in a new three bed property will be up to £5,791 better off.
10. The Mayor's Neighbourhood Refresh scheme will invest £3million in local neighbourhoods to make them safer, cleaner and greener. Practical improvements such as new lighting, more green space, traffic calming and new bins will make a positive difference to local areas.
11. The rights of private renters in Tower Hamlets are being protected with the launch of the Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter. This, alongside innovative new measures such as the landlord licensing scheme, means a better deal for private renters.
12. The Government's housing policies such as the benefit cap and bedroom tax have led to the total number of households in temporary accommodation – including bed and breakfast style housing, hostels, women's refuges and housing leased from private landlords – increasing by 55% from 50,400 in 2010 to 78,180 in 2017.
13. Families are no longer housed in B&B accommodation for longer than the 6 week legal limit, compared to the 174 families that were left to languish in B&Bs under the previous administration.
14. The Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which ensures transparency in the planning process and encourages reviewing viability at each phase of large schemes, aims to provide greater clarity to both applicants and the public and ensures that the principles of sustainable development are at the forefront of decision-making in Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

1. Population growth will bring Tower Hamlets numerous benefits as well as challenges.
2. The Borough benefits from the approach of this Council administration which is meeting the challenge of the housing crisis head on by providing high quality affordable housing, a better deal for private renters, improved local environments and 1,000 council homes.
3. The 174 families left to live in B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks, and their original decision to scrap the Watts Grove development, illustrates the approach of the previous administration: a failure to serve

residents; a failure to properly manage council budgets; and a failure to plan for the future.

4. The Government's HRA cap proposals do not go far enough – borrowing caps should be lifted significantly higher, and not limited to a bidding process.

This Council resolves:

- 1 To work with Mayor John Biggs to continue to deliver more affordable housing for local people.
2. To support Mayor Biggs in his campaign to lift the HRA cap significantly and immediately, to ensure that councils including Tower Hamlets can provide the good quality social housing that is so badly needed.
3. To support Mayor Biggs in his campaign to make sure that the Government does not impose High Value Sales on Local Authorities.

(**Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place/Mayor's Office).

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

Opposition Motion by the Independent Group calling for the abandonment of the planned State Visit by Donald Trump

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Oliur Rahman **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the following friendly amendment to the motion **as tabled**:

Deleted text is scored out.

New text is underlined.

Tower Hamlets is home to one of the country's most diverse communities. The borough has always been a home to migrant communities beginning with the French Huguenots in the 16th Century, followed later by Jewish and Irish migrants. Bangladeshi residents began arriving in the borough during the 1970s. Somalian residents arrived as seamen and then later as a result of a war in Somalia. Tower Hamlets has the highest percentage of Muslim residents in England – 35 per cent compared with the national average of 5 per cent.

Tower Hamlets Council undertakes important and positive community cohesion work through its policies and priorities.

The Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2015 outlined the vision for the borough where people, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The ~~then~~ Strategic Plan 17/18, sets out the council's aim to create more engaged, resilient and cohesive communities.

One of the four key themes of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, as part of its priority outcome to create and maintain a vibrant successful place, was to create a Safe and Cohesive Community and, as part of this, the plan highlighted a commitment to promote community cohesion. A cohesive community enables all to have an equal stake and status in the community; where people have the same opportunities as their neighbours; and where people have a commitment and responsibility to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

Like the neighbouring Royal Borough of Greenwich which formally adopted a similar motion, this Council notes with shock and alarm the decision by Donald Trump, President of the United States, to 'retweet' Islamophobic propaganda from the Britain First Twitter account.

The Council further notes with sadness the President's bigoted attitude (~~Washington Post, Caroline Lucas MP and co-chair of Green Party, Republicans in the United States, Boston Globe, Royal Borough of Greenwich among others~~) towards women, ethnic minorities and Muslims which has resulted in examples of division and hatred within the USA and beyond.

Mr Trump has been invited to visit the United Kingdom by the Government.

This Council also notes Trump's unilateral decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel which is against the United Nations resolutions, the official policy position of our country and all United Nations permanent member states and an overwhelming majority of nations refused to support this illogical decision. Trump's decision has created a huge impediment to achieving peace, to secure a possible two-state solution between Israel and Palestine and has unnecessarily provided a potential opportunity to be exploited by violent extremists which could have a possible knock-on impact on the efforts to deal with extremism and radicalisation in Tower Hamlets.

The Council further notes Trump's earlier remarks in December 2015 when he first stated 'parts of London were so radicalised that police feared for their lives', and then his decision to introduce 'a ban on Muslims travelling to the United States', and other statements and policies designed to sow division. ~~akin to 'Keystone Kops' running around.~~

For centuries our borough has welcomed people who want to make a better life for themselves or who are fleeing persecution. Our borough is one of the greatest of melting pots and as the centre of London moves towards us, in Tower Hamlets, we understand very well how to foster harmony and cohesion in society while defeating policies and decisions created to sow division and hatred.

The Council notes that on numerous occasions where far-right groups such as Britain First, the English Defence League and the Football Lads Alliance have attempted to antagonise local communities in Tower Hamlets, ~~Mr Trump needs to understand when the minority fascists calling themselves 'English Defence League (EDL)' tried to march into Tower Hamlets on 7 March 2013, the united local community led by the then leadership came together to stand up to the forces of bigotry and fascism. Similarly, when the East London Mosque was under siege on 12 March 2016, and again on 11 April 2016 by~~

~~minority fascists calling themselves 'Britain First'~~, it was the local community with a diverse and united population of our great borough, including a local Christian priest, Jewish, Buddhists, Jains, and people of no faith, who all came together to defend the right of their Muslim neighbours to worship peacefully.

The Council notes the positive impact of the work undertaken by the Council under the banner of its 'Community Plan', 'One Tower Hamlets', 'No Place for Hate' and 'Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission' bringing together all community; including faith, communities, community and third sector groups, throughout Tower Hamlets. As such, Council reiterates its commitment to working with residents to further strengthen community cohesion and relations.

The Council notes with regret that this Borough's commitment to maintaining a strong and vibrant community is totally incompatible with the ideology and policies espoused by President Trump and could have a very negative impact upon the positive work of the council.

Council notes Donald Trump has cancelled plans for a "working visit" to the UK which was scheduled for February.

Based on above, London Borough of Tower Hamlets resolves:

1. To fully support representations to the Prime Minister, which call for the offer of a state visit to be withdrawn, and to formally write to ask the Government, on a cross-party basis, to formally oppose the State visit to the UK, should a formal date for the visit be set.
2. The Council further calls upon the government to use funding that would have been spent on security and other arrangements for such a state visit to fund charities like the Jo Cox Foundation, ~~in conjunction with other~~ and local Tower Hamlets-based charities, that promote peace, dialogue and understanding and also tackle homelessness, loneliness and rough sleeping for our vulnerable citizens both locally and across the country.
3. However, should the Government still choose to go ahead with State Visit, this Council makes clear that President Trump would not be welcome in our Borough.
4. Declare Tower Hamlets a Trump-Free Zone like Chicago.

Following debate, the motion as amended was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION:

Tower Hamlets is home to one of the country's most diverse communities. The borough has always been a home to migrant communities beginning with the French Huguenots in the 16th Century, followed later by Jewish and Irish migrants. Bangladeshi residents began arriving in the borough during the 1970s. Somalian residents arrived as seamen and then later as a result of a war in Somalia. Tower Hamlets has the highest percentage of Muslim

residents in England – 35 per cent compared with the national average of 5 per cent.

Tower Hamlets Council undertakes important and positive community cohesion work through its policies and priorities.

The Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2015 outlined the vision for the borough where people, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The Strategic Plan 17/18- sets out the council's aim to create more engaged, resilient and cohesive communities. One of the four key themes of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, as part of its priority outcome to create and maintain a vibrant successful place, was to create a Safe and Cohesive Community and, as part of this, the plan highlighted a commitment to promote community cohesion. A cohesive community enables all to have an equal stake and status in the community; where people have the same opportunities as their neighbours; and where people have a commitment and responsibility to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

Like the neighbouring Royal Borough of Greenwich which formally adopted a similar motion, this Council notes with shock and alarm the decision by Donald Trump, President of the United States, to 'retweet' Islamophobic propaganda from the Britain First Twitter account.

The Council further notes with sadness the President's bigoted attitude towards women, ethnic minorities and Muslims which has resulted in examples of division and hatred within the USA and beyond.

Mr Trump has been invited to visit the United Kingdom by the Government.

This Council also notes Trump's unilateral decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel which is against the United Nations resolutions, the official policy position of our country and all United Nations permanent member states and an overwhelming majority of nations refused to support this illogical decision. Trump's decision has created a huge impediment to achieving peace, to secure a possible two-state solution between Israel and Palestine and has unnecessarily provided a potential opportunity to be exploited by violent extremists which could have a possible knock-on impact on the efforts to deal with extremism and radicalisation in Tower Hamlets.

The Council further notes Trump's earlier remarks in December 2015 when he first stated 'parts of London were so radicalised that police feared for their lives', his decision to introduce 'a ban on Muslims travelling to the United States', and other statements and policies designed to sow division.

For centuries our borough has welcomed people who want to make a better life for themselves or who are fleeing persecution. Our borough is one of the greatest of melting pots and as the centre of London moves towards us, in Tower Hamlets, we understand very well how to foster harmony and cohesion in society while defeating policies and decisions created to sow division and hatred.

The Council notes that on numerous occasions where far-right groups such as Britain First, the English Defence League and the Football Lads Alliance have attempted to antagonise local communities in Tower Hamlets, it was the local community with a diverse and united population of our great borough, including a local Christian priest, Jewish, Buddhists, Jains, and people of no faith, who all came together to defend the right of their Muslim neighbours to worship peacefully.

The Council notes the positive impact of the work undertaken by the Council under the banner of its 'Community Plan', 'One Tower Hamlets', 'No Place for Hate' and 'Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission' bringing together all community; including faith, communities, community and third sector groups, throughout Tower Hamlets. As such, Council reiterates its commitment to working with residents to further strengthen community cohesion and relations.

The Council notes with regret that this Borough's commitment to maintaining a strong and vibrant community is totally incompatible with the ideology and policies espoused by President Trump and could have a very negative impact upon the positive work of the council.

Council notes Donald Trump has cancelled plans for a "working visit" to the UK which was scheduled for February.

Based on above, London Borough of Tower Hamlets resolves:

1. To fully support representations to the Prime Minister, which call for the offer of a state visit to be withdrawn, and to formally write to the Government, on a cross-party basis, to formally oppose the State visit to the UK, should a formal date for the visit be set.
2. The Council further calls upon the government to use funding that would have been spent on security and other arrangements for such a state visit to fund charities like the Jo Cox Foundation and local Tower Hamlets-based charities, that promote peace, dialogue and understanding and also tackle homelessness, loneliness and rough sleeping for our vulnerable citizens both locally and across the country.
3. However, should the Government still choose to go ahead with State Visit, this Council makes clear that President Trump would not be welcome in our Borough.
4. Declare Tower Hamlets a Trump-Free Zone like Chicago.

(Action by: Mayor's Office).

9. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The following questions and in each case supplementary questions were put (except where indicated) and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member-

- 9.1 Question from Councillor John Pierce about Government cuts to police budgets and the impact of this.

- 9.2 Question from Councillor Ohid Ahmed about council-funded police officers.
- 9.3 Question from Councillor Clare Harrisson requesting an update on action to tackle drug dealers.
- 9.4 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan about the Tower Hamlets Drugs Service.
- 9.5 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell about the outcome of the Ofsted monitoring visit for Children's Social Care that took place in December.
- 9.6 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood about the provision of permanent CCTV cameras in Marsh Wall, Glengall Grove, Blackwall Way, Millharbour and Narrow Street.
- 9.7 Question from Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed about support for new and small businesses. (No supplementary question was asked)
- 9.8 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman about a bribery allegation
- 9.9 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders about measures to tackle air pollution in Tower Hamlets.
- 9.10 Question from Councillor Abdul Asad about changes to adult social care services and the impact of this.
- 9.11 Question from Helal Uddin enquiring about the Mayor's £5m Tackling Poverty Fund.

Questioners 9.12- 32 were not put due to lack of time. Written responses would be provided to the questions.

(Action by:--Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services to arrange written responses)

10. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**10.1 Report of Cabinet: Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017-2021**

The Council considered a report on the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017-2021. This plan was forwarded to Council for consideration by the Mayor in Cabinet on 31 October 2017.

DECISION:

1. That the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017-21 at Appendix 1 of the report be adopted.

(Action by: Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community)

11. OTHER BUSINESS**11.1 Localism Act 2011 - Appointment of Second Independent Person**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer proposing the appointment of a second Independent Person. The recommendations were put to the vote under the guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9

DECISION:

The Council agree:

1. The appointment of Rachael Tiffin as a second Independent Person for a period of 4 years effective from the date of the Council meeting and concluding on 16 January 2022.
2. An annual allowance of £1,000 for any person appointed by the Council to the role of Independent Person to replace the existing separate allowances payable for attendance at meetings and training events and consultation on complaints as detailed in paragraph 3.2 and 3.3 of the report.

(Action by: Asmat Hussain Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)

11.2 Review of proportionality and allocation of places on committees and panels of the Council 2017/18

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance, in respect of changes to the proportionality calculations for allocating places on the Council's Committees. The recommendations were put to the vote under the guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9

DECISION:

1. That the review of proportionality as at section 3 of the report be noted and the allocation of seats on committees and panels be agreed for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2017/18 as set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report.
2. To note the committees and panels established for the municipal year 2017/18 as listed in paragraph 4.2 as agreed at the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2017.
3. That Members and deputies be appointed to serve on those committees and panels in accordance with nominations from the political groups to be notified to the Corporate Director, Governance.
4. That the Corporate Director, Governance be authorised to approve the appointment of ungrouped Councillors to any committee places not allocated by the Council to a political group, after consultation with those Councillors and the Speaker of the Council.

(Action by: Asmat Hussain Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No motions were debated due to a lack of time.

The meeting ended at 10.05 p.m.