

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 McGrenera 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 McGrenera 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 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