

Item 6.1 Budget Consultation Outcome 2020-21	
Questions	Response
<p>1. Question A few years there was a discussion about a new strategy document about income generation and specifically whether we would buy assets to generate a return to re-invest into services. What happened to that strategy document?</p>	<p>There have been a number of relevant activities undertaken following an initial scope to develop an income generation strategy approach. In particular a detailed report was received from the Council's strategic partner in 2017 identifying, from comparator information, the extent to which fees and charges could be reviewed and this has been shared with directorate leads and informed subsequent Fees and Charges reports. In addition a phase 2 report on developing an Income Generation Strategy was received in August 2019.</p> <p>These documents now form part of the discussions taking place through the Commercialisation Board which is chaired by a Corporate Director.</p> <p>However, the opportunities to generate income through the purchase of assets to generate a return is subject to further control following concerns from the government over Councils borrowing to invest in such schemes; these concerns also precipitated the recent increase in the rate of the PWLB which was designed to discourage such speculative activity.</p>

Item 6.2 Community Languages Service Review- Options Paper	
Questions	Response
1. Question What languages are currently being taught in state schools in Tower Hamlets at primary and secondary school level?	<p>From research the following languages are taught in secondary schools in Tower Hamlets; Arabic, Modern Greek, Persian, Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese), Russian, Portuguese, Latin, Bengali, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu.</p> <p>We do not hold this information in relation to primary schools</p>
2. Question What percentage of the population in Tower Hamlets speaks Arabic as their home or community language?	<p>According to the 2011 census 0.6% of the population speak Arabic. This amounts to 1,386 people. This is the most recent data available.</p>
3. Question Review of the Community Language Service: Option 3 is proposing to close the service; however it does not appear to be proposing to entirely defund it (the proposal mentions a £600k saving against its £645k budget). What will the residual £45k be used for?	<p>The remaining funding will be used to support providers to obtain a quality mark for their classes, such as from the NRCSE (National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education) or other similar recognised quality accreditation for the voluntary sector.</p>
Item 6.3 Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy 2019-2041	
Questions	Response
1. Question The report makes reference in Paragraph 3.7 to a higher rate of response to the online consultation from those who are already active/sustainable travellers, however it is not clear what is being implied by this?	<p>The purpose of Paragraph 3.7 is to inform the reader of the differing samples, by main mode of travel between the online and residents phone surveys. As Appendix C states, the online survey's respondents are self-selected, although the phone surveys samples were chosen to be reflective of those in the borough.</p>

PRE-SCRUTINY QUESTIONS – CABINET 18 12 2019

<p>2. Question Are we to take that their submissions are less representative and hence to be weighted down, or rather that their submissions potentially carry additional weight in they are from people who have already adopted the behaviours sought in the strategy? This should be clarified as it's important that we are transparent in how data is interpreted in consultations, particularly where support for Outcome 2 was lower (though still positive) than for our other outcomes.</p>	<p>No submissions in any of the surveys have been weighted up or down. As above, the phone surveys' results are regarded as more representative of the borough population.</p> <p>We received 1,200 responses to the online survey and acknowledge the significant interest in the issues and support for the strategy from the residents.</p>
<p>3. Question In the strategy document itself, on Page 43, mention is made of securing parking for carers. This section of the equalities impact form is left blank. Does the Council plan specific initiatives on parking for carers?</p>	<p>The reference to carers on Page 43 of the draft strategy that refers to the Council's Travel Assistance Policy and the Blue Badge Scheme which enables carers to transport disabled children and adults as well as older people with mobility needs through the provision of a direct payment or the Blue Badge Scheme.</p> <p>There are no separate plans for parking for carers other than through these existing schemes.</p> <p>The Council equalities impact form will be updated accordingly to reflect the impact on carers.</p>
<p>4. Newham Council in September 2019 released a document called the Lea River park area, proposed crossings and bridges. It shows 8 new bridges between Tower Hamlets and Newham across the Lea river I cannot find these mentioned anywhere in our Transport Strategy only the new South Dock Bridge Question Have we informed Newham Council that these bridges are not part of our transport strategy to 2041?</p>	<p>Officers are engaged with Newham Council on the proposed crossings connecting the two boroughs. Such detail will be taken forward in the appropriate planning documents including the East of Borough Area Action Plan.</p>

<p>5. Question Outcome 5 refers to replacing all diesel vehicles in the Council's fleet with electric, hybrid and cleaner vehicles. As part of its climate emergency declaration, the Council is committed to being a zero emissions organisation by 2025 - how is having hybrid vehicles (and 'cleaner' ones - a vague term that may include petrol or CNG) compatible with this objective?</p>	<p>The purpose of this measure is to commit the Council to procuring the cleanest vehicles available for the purpose they service over the lifetime of the strategy. The phrasing recognises that currently, zero tailpipe emission vehicles are not currently available for all vehicle classes involved in support Council operations.</p> <p>Other measures contained in the Transport Strategy such as Liveable Streets and tree planting will help to offset any residual greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's fleet to 2025. The Council will also maintain oversight of its goal to being a zero emissions organisation toward 2025</p>
Item 7.1 Angela Court	Response
<p>Following legal advice given to Mulberry Housing Society, it was not deemed to be on acceptable financial terms and an alternative funding arrangement has therefore been sought.</p>	
<p>1. Question: What were the unacceptable financial terms referred to?</p>	<p>The financial terms related to the price (premium and rent), a share of any surplus income and grant conditions.</p>
<p>2. Question: Are there are any other developments being considered by Mulberry currently?</p>	<p>The Council is in negotiations for the purchase of other section 106 schemes and consideration will be given to the role of Mulberry Housing Society (MHS) in relation to those schemes.</p>
<p>3. Question: What is the future of Mulberry Housing Society now?</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing is one of the key priorities for the Council. Due to restrictions within the financial operating environment, the Council set up MHS in 2017 as a vehicle to deliver affordable homes via grants of Right to Buy receipts and via borrowing. Since then the</p>

	<p>Government has removed the borrowing cap and councils are able to borrow to fund the provision of affordable homes.</p> <p>This has the potential to affect the rationale for local authority housing vehicles set up before the restrictions were removed. They could be seen to be competing against council house building programmes and, given the austerity measures that councils are facing, there could be duplication of effort and wasted resources in managing and funding delivery vehicles alongside in-house provision.</p> <p>The role of housing companies in meeting housing need should be kept under review.</p>
<p>4. Question: Paragraph 6.7 says as the cost floor is lower than the discounted sale price, it is ignored and the sale must be at the discounted sale price (market value less RTB discount), preventing tenants obtaining the properties at significantly reduced prices”</p> <p>This is unclear; it is clear that after 3 years of occupation Right to Buy kicks in but can this section be made clearer please, what does significantly reduced prices mean?</p>	<p>The Right to Buy does apply to these properties. However, there was concern that as the Council had paid a reduced price for the accommodation (the cost floor) and if it were to then apply a RTB discount upon receipt of an application that this might mean that properties would be selling significantly below the normal discounted rate.</p> <p>Upon checking the rules potential purchasers will accrue discount in the same way as they usually do using a market valuation for the property rather than the cost floor.</p> <p>This point is included in the report for the avoidance of doubt.</p>

PRE-SCRUTINY QUESTIONS – CABINET 18 12 2019