

Mayor's Report to Council 21st September 2016

John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets

This is the first Mayor's Report since the Summer. It has again been a very busy period, although a little quieter in August.

Work has continued with thinking about next year's budget, and the need to protect services while making savings.

We have hopefully reached a point of greater progress in exiting the Directions imposed on us under the previous Mayoral administration.

Further to the 'Organisational Review' announced in my last report, a consultation is currently under way on a new, leaner council structure at its top three tiers. This will better focus on my administration's priorities, and will contribute to our budget savings target.

I held my fifth 'Mayoral Assembly' in Poplar recently. It was well-attended and as always helped to make my administration more transparent and introduced me to or reminded me of a range of resident concerns.

The Mela took place successfully at the end of July. I am pleased to report that not only does it appear to have been an enjoyable day but that the anxieties which led to a deputation to the last Council meeting appear not to have been borne out.

A few other points:

I am delighted that Phillip Glanville has been elected as the new Mayor of Hackney.

As a civic duty, I recently had the pleasure of meeting Prince Charles at the reopening of Shadwell Fire Station.

I recently attended a 100th birthday party of a resident in Bow. Her family, as are many, are now scattered across the country but it was great to see and congratulate a resident who has 'seen it all'.

Next month sees the 80th Anniversary of the 'Battle of Cable Street', an historic occasion at which of course there will be a very small number of residents present who remember those events directly. Keeping the memory alive is important and the commemorations will help us to do this.

Key Events/Announcements

Budget Over the Summer myself, cabinet members and officers have been discussing and working up proposals to balance the Council's budget, while meeting existing and new priorities and reducing spend by approximately £60million over the next three years. This is going to be an extremely difficult exercise, but it is my duty to help us steer our way through it. The exercise is, after all, one which many other councils have carried out. I will work with colleagues to try to ensure that we develop proposals which protect the most vulnerable, continue to improve services for all, are underpinned by a commitment to equalities, and which promote community cohesion.

Organisational Review On 14th Sept General Purposes Committee received a report on the proposed new top level organisational structure of the Council.

This will be subject to consultation over the next few weeks. I have been engaged in conversations with the Chief Executive, my Cabinet and others about the principle of these changes and believe they represent a good set of ideas as to how we can better manage our resources, achieve stronger corporate governance, meet our new priorities and serve local people, while helping us to meet our budget challenges.

Youth service Audit Committee last night received a report on the youth service. While I believe that even now not all has been disclosed I am pleased that, finally, we are able to discuss more openly the events of the past few years. It places in a new context the role of some local politicians and the recent protests at a Council meeting about the service. I am committed to us providing an excellent service. Returning to the investigations, I understand that over £2million has gone 'missing', and one may assume this was effectively stolen. My outrage is added to by the understanding that the Metropolitan Police appear unable to secure enough evidence to mount any prosecutions. This is a blot on the recent history of our borough, which sits alongside, and was possibly connected in some ways with, the political events of last year.

Commissioners: I have just written to the Secretary of State with our latest six month review of progress against the Directions. I am hopeful that three of the seven directions – on Staffing, Procurement and Elections – will end. I was hoping for a fourth – on Communications – but with a new service head in post the new proposals for the delivery of our communications remain fresh and I understand that the Commissioners wish to see further progress with them. On Grants, I am hoping that we might regain our grant making powers, but with a modified direction, in which decisions will be made by my cabinet, subject to the new scrutiny arrangements and subject also to a continued oversight Direction. This would mean that Commissioners would no longer hold executive powers. On property, there remain some matters to resolve, principally about the use and charging of community buildings.

The Commissioners have discussed at length 'whistle blowing' and we have reviewed and relaunched our policy and processing in a way that should regain confidence. As regards historic complaints, a '**Clear Up**' Team' has been set up to deal with any remaining allegations of impropriety or serious concerns residents or staff might have. The team will investigate outstanding allegations which may have taken place between October 2010 and June 2016.

Early Years: The consultation on Early Years savings has finished. We are considering the options. It seems likely that the core 'offer' of 12 Childrens Centres will be confirmed, together with I hope a number of 'satellites'. However a proper analysis of the consultation responses is required and more information will be provided when this has happened and a decision can be made.

Air Quality & its link to road vehicles: I am progressing with Ayas Miah, Amy Whitelock Gibbs and Rachel Blake our policy development on Air Quality. This will sit alongside the Mayor of London's priority, which will be announced soon. I am instructing officers to develop a comprehensive approach to the Silvertown Crossing application, designed to take account of

these matters and the other interests of our borough, including tackling the appalling congestion and poor air quality at Blackwall.

Community Language Service: There will be a 'petition debate' at tonight's meeting. I will make a statement at that time and I hope that this will be appended to the minutes of the meeting. I do value the service, and I know that many in our community do. I do however recognise that many others question its appropriateness for public funding. I will be recommending that we retain support for the service but that regardless of the final choices, which the Council must consider in its budget making, we must consider the findings of an Audit report, received by the Audit Committee last night. We will need to make some tough choices about the way the service operates, both in the short term and into the future.

Somali Taskforce: My taskforce concluded its evidence and has drafted a report. I have asked Cllr Amina Ali to Chair, and Cllr Whitelock Gibbs to be the Deputy Chair of the Group as it moves into an implementation phase. I am impatient for progress and look forward to hearing, and making, announcements soon.

Housing Strategy: A draft housing strategy has been published for consultation. We are making progress with housing and will make further announcements soon.

Health & Wellbeing Board: I have stood down from the Board, but with a commitment to attending when required, and from time-to-time. I appointed Amy Whitelock Gibbs as its Chair and meet with her, the Directors of Adult Services and of Public Health and representatives of the CCG and various Health Trusts regularly. Good health outcomes, and a particular interest in progressing our joint responsibilities including for public health remain a priority.

Tower Hamlets Community Housing: I wanted to record my appreciation for the work of Mike Tyrrell as Chief Executive of THCH over the past few years. While I should declare that he happens to be an old friend, I believe that he is widely acknowledged to have done a fantastic, and caring, job in launching and establishing THCH. It is in many ways an exemplar and, while all such organisations face challenges, I wish all of our Social Landlords showed the same level of attentiveness, entrenched in their culture, to the well-being of their residents.

Election Petitioners: I am of course here following the election petition, disqualification of my predecessor and subsequent by-election. It distresses me that following the success of their challenge they now face ruinous legal bills. I will be writing urgently to the Prime Minister on this matter, as it appears to defy the rules of natural justice that this should happen.

Cabinet and Mayoral Decisions: Cabinet has met once since my last report and considered a number of matters, with decisions published on the Council's website. In addition, Mayoral Decisions have been signed on:

- Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board – Update to Terms of Reference

- Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf FE Education Trust Appointments
- Contracts for the Supply of the Integrated Youth and Community Service Programme 2016/17
- Academy Conversion, St Paul's Way Trust School
- Clear Up Project

Engagements and Meetings: 21 July 2016 – 21 September 2016

- 21 July 2016
 - Meeting with One Housing and Argent
 - Tower Hamlets Education Business P'ship: Telethon 1000 Club
 - Meeting with Spitalfields Housing Association
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Law, Probity and Governance
 - Meeting with Service Head, Asset Management
 - Mayor's Surgery
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 22 July 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Resources
 - Meeting with Stifford Centre
 - Quarterly Portfolio Review meeting – Cllr Rachel Blake
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Children's Services
 - Meeting with Councillor Rachel Blake
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
- 23 July 2016
 - Phoenix Heights Eid Celebration Event
- 25 July 2016
 - Budget Meeting
 - Ben Johnson Road Traders
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Development and Renewal
 - Press Conference
- 26 July 2016
 - Mansard Roofs Briefing Meeting
 - Future Model of Youth Service
 - Cabinet/CMT Budget meeting
 - Business Lunch with Canary Wharf Group
 - Meeting with Metropolitan Police re. Britain First
 - Cabinet
 - King Georges Field Charity Board
 - St Paul's Way Evening Reception
- 27 July 2016
 - Rising in the East Conference – Shaping the Future of East London
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Ethical Care Charter press conference
 - Governance Review Working Group
- 28 July 2016
 - Snapdragon Breakfast Event
 - Mayor's Housing Meeting
 - Meeting with Councillor Sirajul Islam
 - Meeting with Healthwatch Tower Hamlets

- Meeting with Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs
 - Youth Services Future Shape
 - Strategic Development Committee
- 31 July 2016
 - Tower Hamlets Mela
 - NoPlaceForHate Rally, City Hall
- 1 August 2016
 - Meeting with Jim Fitzpatrick MP
 - Meeting with Councillor Shiria Khatun
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Development and Renewal
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Meeting with Councillor Ayas Miah
 - Weavers Community Forum
- 2 August 2016
 - Meeting with Officers re. Syrian Refugee's
 - Introductory meeting with new head of Communications
 - Meeting with Telereal Trillium
 - Meeting with Commissioner, Sir Ken Knight
 - Meeting with Councillor Rachael Saunders
 - Youth Service Review – 2nd stakeholder event
 - MAB workshop on Air Quality
- 3 August 2016
 - Meeting with Len Duvall AM
 - Meeting with Councillor Danny Hassell
 - Bangladeshi Parents and Carers Association Charity Fundraiser
 - Day Opportunity Summer BBQ
 - Meeting with Stepney FC
 - Meeting with Tower Hamlets Homes Chief Executive
 - Development Committee
- 4 August 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor David Edgar
 - Meeting with Lansbury Mosque
 - Interview with The Guardian
 - Meeting with Professor Tony Travers
 - Visit to Ragged School Museum
 - Mayor's Surgery
- 5 August 2016
 - Quarterly Portfolio Review meeting – Cllr Amy Whitelock Gibbs
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Meeting with Councillor Rachael Blake
 - Visit to Spitalfields City Farm
- 6 August 2016
 - Victoria Park 'Great Day Out' event
- 13 August 2016
 - Poplar Baths Launch Event
- 15 August 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor Shiria Khatun
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Development and Renewal
- 16 August 2016

- Meeting with officers re. KEMP and GLL
- Meeting with Tower Hamlets Community Housing
- Quarterly Portfolio Review meeting – Cllr Sirajul Islam
- Meeting with officer re. S106 Cohesion projects
- 17 August 2016
 - New School on Paton Close
 - Bromley by Bow Centre Eid Party
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Meeting with Tower Hamlets CVS re. Community Buildings
 - Pre-meet for Best Value Board
 - Site Visit to Middleton Green
- 18 August 2016
 - A-level Results Day
 - Housing Company Meeting
 - Industrial Relations Review
 - Summer Tea Dance for Dementia Swimming Project
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Children's Services
 - Mayor's Surgery
 - Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum
- 19 August 2016
 - Meeting with NAFAS
 - Meeting with Councillor Rachel Blake
 - Local Plan – Update on stakeholder engagement
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Quarterly Portfolio Review Meeting – Cllr Rachael Saunders
 - Isle of Dogs Infrastructure
- 22 August 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor Amina Ali
 - Meeting with Councillor Sirajul Islam
 - Budget meeting
 - Meeting with Councillor Helal Uddin
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Development and Renewal
 - Highways Briefing meeting
- 23 August 2016
 - 1 Love Community Visit
 - Meeting with Commissioners
 - Quarterly Portfolio Review meeting – Cllr Joshua Peck
 - Waste Briefing meeting
 - LBTH/GLA/TfL OAPF Placemaking discussion
- 24 August 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor John Pierce
 - Meeting with officer re. property matters
 - Stifford Centre Summer Youth Project
 - Meeting with Crest Nicholson
 - Quarterly Portfolio Review meeting – Cllr Ayas Miah
 - Meeting with Councillor Asma Begum
 - Friends of Island Gardens meeting
- 25 August 2016
 - GSCE Results day
 - Attlee Youth and Community Centre – CORE project

- Mayor's Surgery
- 26 August 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor Julia Dockerill
- 31 August 2016
 - Budget Briefing Session
- 5 September 2016
 - Meeting with Jim Fitzpatrick MP
 - Tour of Aldgate and Aldgate East
 - Visit to Weekly Dosh new office
 - ITV London interview
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Development and Renewal
- 6 September 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor Amina Ali
 - Best Value Programme Review Board
 - Meeting with Commissioner Sir Ken Knight
 - Cabinet/CMT Budget meeting
 - Meeting with Councillor Rachael Saunders
 - Cabinet
 - ASB and Drug issues – Weavers Ward
- 7 September 2016
 - Civic Centre – Architects presentation and proposals
 - Re-opening of Shadwell Fire Station by Prince Charles
 - Visit to Tower Hamlets Law Centre
 - Meath Gardens Green Flag Photocall
 - Accessibility Day visit, Arts Pavilion, Mile End Park
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Council's Strategic approach to working with Health Partners
 - Mayoral Assembly
- 8 September 2016
 - Isle of Dogs Working Group
 - Meeting with Leader of Islington Council
 - Infrastructure Delivery Board Agenda discussion
 - Meeting with Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs
 - Mayfield House discussion
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Mayor's Surgery
 - Strategic Development Committee
- 9 September 2016
 - Internship Cohort – Last day presentation
 - Channel S – 20mph/School places interview
- 12 September 2016
 - Eid Prayers
 - Apprentice Scheme Photo Opportunity
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Meeting with Constituent
- 13 September 2016
 - Cabinet/CMT Budget meeting
 - Tension Monitoring Group – Hate Crime discussion
 - Meeting with residents of Louisa Street/Gardens & Beaumont Grove/Square

- 14 September 2016
 - Procedures discussion
 - LBTH/Poplar Harca Strategic Partnership meeting
 - Meeting with Councillor Sirajul Islam
 - Meeting with Councillor Sabina Akhtar
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Meeting with Council Officers and Group Leaders
 - General Purposes Committee
- 15 September 2016
 - Breakfast Meeting, GL Hearn
 - Mela and Mayor's Cup arrangements
 - Meeting with Councillor Asma Begum
 - Market Surgery
 - Meeting with Acting Corp Director, Law, Probity and Governance
 - Mayor's Surgery
- 16 September 2016
 - Meeting with Councillor Amy Whitlock Gibbs
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Resources
 - Meeting with Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership
 - Meeting with Councillor Rachel Blake
 - Visit to Alice Model Nursery School
 - Constituents 100th Birthday party
 - Early Years meeting with residents
 - ICT Partnership Launch
- 19 September 2016
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Meeting re. Aya Sofia
 - Meeting with Rushanara Ali MP
 - Meeting with Corporate Director, Development and Renewal
- 20 September 2016
 - Meeting with Mayor Robin Wales
 - Meeting with Councillor Sirajul Islam
 - Planning meeting
 - Cabinet/CMT Budget meeting
 - Tower Hamlets Education Partnership Launch
- 21 September 2016
 - SEN Review meeting
 - Meeting with Chief Executive
 - Neighbourhood Refresh Programme briefing
 - Council