



Meeting of the

# Tower Hamlets Council

## Supplemental Agenda

**Wednesday, 15 May 2024 at 7.00 p.m.**

### **VENUE**

Council Chamber,  
Whitechapel Town Hall  
160 Whitechapel Road,  
London E1 1BJ

**Further information about this meeting is available in the main agenda.**

### **Democratic Services Contact:**

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# London Borough of Tower Hamlets

## Council



### Supplemental Agenda

Wednesday, 15 May 2024

7.00 p.m.

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**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL**

**HELD AT 7.04 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2024**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL**

**Members Present:**

Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Member)	Councillor Iqbal Hossain (Member)
Councillor Faroque Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kabir Hussain (Member)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kamrul Hussain (Member)
Councillor Leelu Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain (Member)
Councillor Musthak Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Asma Islam (Member)
Councillor Saied Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Sirajul Islam (Member)
Councillor Shafi Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Ahmodul Kabir (Member)
Councillor Suluk Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled (Member)
Councillor Ohid Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Ahmodur Khan (Member)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar (Member)	Councillor Sabina Khan (Member)
Councillor Amina Ali (Member)	Councillor James King (Member)
Councillor Maisha Begum (Member)	Councillor Abdul Malik (Member)
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait (Member)	Councillor Abdul Mannan (Member)
Councillor Rachel Blake (Member)	Councillor Ana Miah (Member)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin (Member)	Councillor Harun Miah (Member)
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Amin Rahman (Member)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Rebaka Sultana (Member)
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Maium Talukdar (Member)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Bellal Uddin (Member)
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Abdal Ullah (Member)
Councillor Marc Francis (Member)	Councillor Abdul Wahid (Member)
Councillor Peter Golds (Member)	

**Agenda Order**

During the meeting, Members agreed to change the order of business. To aid clarity the minutes are presented in the order items appear on the Agenda. At the meeting Agenda Item 12.1 (Motion on Tower Hamlets- A Go-to Borough) was taken after Agenda Item 7 (Administration Motion for Debate). Agenda Item 8 (Opposition Motion for Debate) followed thereafter.

Council also adjourned for a 15-minute prayer break at 20:48 to 21:04 in between Item 12.1 and Item 8.

### **The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Jahed Choudhury in the Chair**

The Speaker of the Council provided his update to the Council. He noted that he had attended several events, including an art exhibition showcasing artwork of secondary school pupils, as well as participating in sport awards, book launches and citizenship ceremonies. Other highlights included:

- Attending Iftar meals during the holy month of Ramadan;
- Hosting the Lord Mayor and his visit to Billingsgate market for the annual rent payment ceremony;
- Commemorating Altab Ali day; and
- Meeting the winners of the Civic Awards at a ceremony held in early April.

Finally, the Speaker congratulated Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Alibor Choudhury, from the Mayor's Office, Raadiyah Hussain and Ethan Cowles from Supporting Families as well as other staff and residents who took part in the London Marathon.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Amy Lee and Councillor Asma Begum.

Councillor Asma Begum and Councillor Ayas Miah joined the meeting online.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS**

Cllr Marc Francis and Cllr Rachel Blake declared a Non-Registerable Interest in Agenda Item 12.1 (Motion on Tower Hamlets – a Go To Borough) in that the matter under discussion affected a body they had registered as a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. They left the meeting once the interest had been identified during discussion of that item.

#### **3. MINUTES**

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the minutes of the ordinary Council meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the Budget meeting minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and the extraordinary meeting minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 be approved as a correct record of the proceedings and the Speaker was authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

Steve Halsey, Chief Executive provided an update to the Council meeting, highlighting the following issues:

- Steve Halsey thanked the Elections team, polling clerks and count staff for their work on the London Assembly elections. He said he had visited over 20 polling stations on the day of the election and was pleased to see the elections conducted in such a positive way.
- He also stated the Leisure Service had been insourced and re-branded as “Be Well” as of the 1<sup>st</sup> May. He said the service would be providing holistic programmes for older people, people with long-term conditions as well as women and girls so as to increase participation and ensure all groups had access to good leisure services.

#### 5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

##### 5.1 Petition to Defend Free Speech and Democracy

Alex Owolade and Shanaz Akhtar Chowdhury presented their petition relating to defending Free Speech and Democracy. Mr Owolade said many people in the community had concerns relating to the government’s Prevent programme. He said the Prevent programme targeted the Muslim community and was an Islamophobic policy which restricted free speech. He said this had become more acute due to the on-going war in Palestine. He said there had been incidents where innocent comments have been misconstrued, resulting in harsh action under the prevent programme.

He asked the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to meet with local community groups so they could share their experience with Prevent and for Tower Hamlets to make a stand against the Prevent policy.

Members asked questions of the petitioner before Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities responded to matters raised in the petition. Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury stated the Council had a duty to report on the government’s Prevent programme. However, he was aware of some misplaced and misguided referrals. He said the referral team were treating each case robustly and sensitively. He said they were following best practice and guidance, but fully understood the frustration within the community. He said tension had heightened during the current war in Palestine.

The Council **RESOLVED**:

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

## 6. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Lutfur Rahman presented his report to the Council.

The Opposition Group Leader, Councillor Sirajul Islam then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Mayor Rahman provided concluding remarks.

## 7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

### MOTION ON A PROGRESSIVE COUNCIL: TWO YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION AND RECOVERY

Council considered a motion as printed in the tabled agenda on the Council being a progressive council: two years of transformation and recovery that had been moved by Councillor Saied Ahmed and seconded by Councillor Maium Talukdar.

Following debate, the tabled motion moved by Councillor Saied Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

#### **This council notes:**

- That two years have passed since the re-election of Mayor Lutfur Rahman and the *Aspire* group.
- That these two years have seen huge levels of investment – not only financially, but also of time; energy; and dedication – to ensure that the Council could begin to deliver services and governance worthy of the residents of Tower Hamlets.
- That upon returning to Office, the Mayor and his Councillors inherited a Council which was financially unstable – with six years of accounts unsigned; £20million of missed savings targets; millions of pounds lent to neighbouring authorities during the COVID-19 and cost-of-living crises; unpaid VAT receipts of over £1million over six years; £11million of unreconciled adult social care payments with significant risk or duplication; spiralling costs to complete the new Town Hall; and grants awarded through single-applicant processes. There were also governance issues – with five years of unsigned *Annual Governance Statements*; one-year budget-setting processes; struggling statutory services, reflected in failed Ofsted and Youth Justice reports; rising crime and community safety issues; and a string of interim Corporate Directors in statutory positions, including the Section 151.
- That public services significantly reduced with minimal resources expended to develop a thriving and accessible network of delivery. Instead, reserves were increased, all while the services available to

residents were allowed to decline and – in some cases – disappear completely.

- That the introduction of the controversial Fire and Hire Policy by the previous Administration led to a palpable loss of staff morale, likely to be the lowest ever given the 90% support for a strike when Unison held a ballot. The introduction of inferior contracts through the *TOWER* rewards scheme contributed to a negative impact on workforce. This was reflected in a council-wide strike, involving national Trade Union leaders.
- That this was compounded in our view by a disconnect between the Mayor's Office and the then-Corporate Leadership Team, allowing a 'two-council culture' to develop, hindering service delivery and strategic clarity in the process.
- That at the earliest possible opportunity – Full Council July 2022 – this administration called for a 'Council-wide' audit to identify the failings that had been hindering delivery; good governance; and fiscal prudence over the previous seven years.

**This council believes:**

- That the radical measures taken by the current Administration, to reinvest in key services and clean up bad governance and financial practice across the Council, has led to a recovery and reinvigoration of service delivery and performance across the Authority.
- That, through the holistic transformation of how the Council sets its budgets – underpinned by a three-year MTFS strategy and regular financial health checks – residents can now access a range of services that have been funded sustainably, allowing for their sustainability and delivery into the future.
- That the reintroduction and reinvigoration of such key services as the Education Maintenance Allowance; University Bursaries; Free School Meals for all students up to the age of 16; £10million investment to support residents through the cost of living crisis; a universal freeze for all residents in the first year and as per the *Aspire Manifesto* a continuing freeze for the poorest to protect low and middle earners; additional investment in the Youth Service receiving nearly £11million extra a year; strengthened community safety, through the recruitment of 42 additional Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers, enveloped funds for extra police officers and new CCTV infrastructure; reconnecting and listening to residents through the reopening of 5 residents hubs across the borough; improving residents health and wellbeing through the insourcing of the Council's leisure services, ensuring that no resident is left behind; protecting the environment through the planting of thousands of new trees, the retrofitting of Council buildings with green technology and through the installation of over a thousand Electric Vehicle charging points, with more to come; and a revitalised and resourced Waste Service, has slowly seen the Council and borough

return from years of cuts and neglect to a position of delivery and resident satisfaction.

- That this progress and ambition was identified and commended in the recent *LGA Corporate Peer Review*. The Council has also won awards for its Town Hall; Free School Meals service; as well as being nominated for nine other parliamentary and national awards.
- That the strides taken to redress and resolve the financial and governance issues inherited from the previous administration – facilitated by a new one-council culture where the Mayor and Corporate Management Team work together to solve issues – has ensured that the financial and operational health of the Council has been drastically improved.
- That this is reflected in a transformative and sustainable MTFS programme; a clean and audited set of accounts; up-to-date *Annual Governance Statements*; repaid outstanding VAT receipts; well-run and improved performance in key statutory services; and an ongoing council-wide restructuring to further strengthen and improve good governance and performance across the organisation.
- That the improvements made are looking to make Tower Hamlets one of the best run and ambitious Local Authorities, not only in London, but in the entire country.

**This council resolves:**

- To continue to support the Best Value Inspectors in their examination of the Council, and to offer to share best practice for other authorities looking to implement similar improvements.
- To continue to work with and implement the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Review.
- To constantly undergo self-examination and evaluation, identifying ways in which it can improve while continuing to deliver for the people who matter most, the residents.
- To continue to strive for excellence across the council's services, and look beyond the next two years to the future, to ensure that such delivery can be sustained for future generations.

**8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE**

**MOTION ON: BEST VALUE INSPECTIONS**

Council considered a motion as printed in the tabled papers on the best Value Inspections that had been moved by Councillor Marc Francis and seconded by Councillor Sirajul Islam.



Council also considered the amendment proposed by Councillor Saied Ahmed and seconded by Councillor Kabir Ahmed as set out in the tabled papers.

Additions Underlined

Deletions ~~Struckthrough~~

**This Council notes:**

- April 2024 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Government's decision to instruct PwC to undertake a 'best value inspection' of Tower Hamlets Council during Lutfur Rahman's first term as Executive Mayor;
- Despite opposition from Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Tower Hamlets Council corporately to this audit, PwC concluded that Tower Hamlets Council was failing to comply with its best value duty which the government considered amounted to serious irregularity in the allocation of some grants and the disposal of some council-owned assets, as well as noting the allegations of possible fraudulent payments in the Youth Services Team that were subject to a separate police investigation; The police found no case to answer.
- As a result of these findings, in December 2014, the former Secretary of State issued directions for independent Commissioners to be sent into Tower Hamlets Council to oversee the award of grants, the sale of assets, publicity and subsequently further directions were issued requiring the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive.
- In April 2015, following Mayor Lutfur Rahman's removal from office, the former Secretary of State issued further directions which gave the independent Commissioners the powers 'to ensure that there is effective financial management safeguarding the assets and financial integrity of the Authority' which amounted to the power to intervene in all significant financial transactions by the authority.
- Independent Commissioners finally ended their role in 2018 after Tower Hamlets Council we believe that under former Mayor John Biggs' leadership demonstrated significant progress in all the areas in which concerns had been raised by PwC and the Secretary of State; yet it was discovered in 2022, that there were still many significant and easily identifiable issues in these areas, including six years of unsigned Council accounts and five years of unpublished annual governance statements.
- Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Tower Hamlets First / Aspire Councillors have never publicly apologised to the people of Tower Hamlets for the issues revealed by the PwC audit;
- In December 2023 a local government peer review report identified some positives about Tower Hamlets Council since Lutfur Rahman's re-election as Executive Mayor, and whilst noting that considerable staff

churn at senior managerial level is not uncommon following a change of political and managerial leadership it was important the council now reaches a more settled state. It also highlighted concerns about the lack of women's voices in decision making and referenced a 'Two Council Culture' that impacted on the speed of decision making.

- As the LGA stated "Fuelling the two-council culture is an evident lack of trust from some members and officers (although it should be noted that this is not at front line level). This, if not addressed, could undermine the further delivery of the Mayor's priorities as well as impacting on the effective operation of a number of the council's business-as-usual functions. This mistrust between members and officers, whilst it is not uniform, is problematic and all involved need to communicate in a more open and collaborative fashion with clear and established pathways for decision making."
- In December 2023, Tower Hamlets Council published an 'action plan' in response to the LGA Peer Review Team's concerns without having spoken to opposition councillors about its content, and which will not properly address concerns about governance raised; which we believe wasn't the case
- At a Cabinet meeting in January 2024, the Mayor claimed that the LGA Peer Review Team's criticisms were actually about the governing culture under former Mayor John Biggs, which wasn't the case;
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024, the Minister of State for Local Government announced that he was instructing an independent team led by former Chief Executive of Newham Council Kim Bromley-Derry CBE DL to undertake a further 'best value inspection' of Tower Hamlets Council with immediate effect, including of its leadership, governance, organisational culture and use of resources;
- The inspection team has been specifically asked to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the audit and scrutiny functions, the appointment to senior management posts; the expansion of the Mayor's Office and use of advisors; policy and practice in grant-making and *"the use of resources for elections and the maintenance of the independence of the Returning Officer"*.

**This Council believes;**

- It should be a concern for Mayor Lutfur Rahman and the 24 Aspire Party councillors that the manner in which they lead Tower Hamlets Council means it is again subject to an independent 'best value inspection' under their political leadership; despite significant, demonstrable improvements in the Council's finances, governance, and performance, including the signing off of these outstanding six

years of accounts, and the publication of all five outstanding annual governance statements.

- There is now a serious risk that the Secretary of State will again decide to send Commissioners in to oversee spending, sales of assets, governance and the forthcoming elections, including the General Election and the 2026 local elections;
- Having Commissioners run Tower Hamlets Council again is not in the interest of our residents as it takes decision-making out of the hands of democratically-elected members;
- The person best placed to stop Commissioners being sent in is Mayor Lutfur Rahman, through making a fundamental change in the manner in which he leads Tower Hamlets Council.

**This Council resolves:**

- To call on Mayor Lutfur Rahman to reduce the number of advisors and consultants in the Mayor's Office and remove any media/communications staff from its line-management;
- To call on the Chief Executive to consult with opposition councillors on the actions needed to give confidence to the public that there will be a significant enhancement of the scrutiny and audit functions, including acting on the LGA Peer Review Team's recommendation that the Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee should be chaired by Opposition councillors;
- To call on Mayor Lutfur Rahman and the Chief Executive to continue to fully and immediately comply with any requests for information from the 'best value inspection' team;
- To call on the Monitoring Officer to ensure there is full transparency in political decision-making, including by providing elected members with the legal advice obtained at the request of Mayor Lutfur Rahman in relation to his powers in 2022 and 2023;
- To call on the Chief Executive to continue with ~~commence~~ an open and independent process for making appointments to the Women's Commission which is being established to address the absence of female voices in decision-making by Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his Cabinet.

Following debate, the amendment moved by Councillor Saied Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The motion as amended by Councillor Saied Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

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lack of women's voices in decision making and referenced a 'Two Council Culture' that impacted on the speed of decision making.

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**This Council believes;**

- It should be a concern for Mayor Lutfur Rahman and the 24 Aspire Party councillors that the manner in which they lead Tower Hamlets Council means it is again subject to an independent 'best value inspection' under their political leadership; despite significant, demonstrable improvements in the Council's finances, governance, and performance, including the signing off of these outstanding six years of accounts, and the publication of all five outstanding annual governance statements.

- There is now a serious risk that the Secretary of State will again decide to send Commissioners in to oversee spending, sales of assets, governance and the forthcoming elections, including the General Election and the 2026 local elections;
- Having Commissioners run Tower Hamlets Council again is not in the interest of our residents as it takes decision-making out of the hands of democratically-elected members;
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- To call on Mayor Lutfur Rahman to reduce the number of advisors and consultants in the Mayor's Office and remove any media/communications staff from its line-management;
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- To call on Mayor Lutfur Rahman and the Chief Executive to continue to fully and immediately comply with any requests for information from the 'best value inspection' team;
- To call on the Monitoring Officer to ensure there is full transparency in political decision-making, including by providing elected members with the legal advice obtained at the request of Mayor Lutfur Rahman in relation to his powers in 2022 and 2023;
- To call on the Chief Executive to continue with an open and independent process for making appointments to the Women's Commission which is being established to address the absence of female voices in decision-making by Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his Cabinet.

**9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**

There were no executive or committee reports for Council to consider at the meeting.

**10. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business for Council to consider at the meeting.

**11. 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.

**11.1 Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain**

Can the Lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts which were left unsigned for 6 consecutive years under the previous administration.

**Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living**

All accounts up to and including 2019/20 have been signed off. The 3 remaining outstanding years (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) have now all been published and are expected to be signed off by the auditors by September 2024.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain**

Can you please state what has been learnt from the unassigned accounts?

**Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living**

The cost of six-years of unassigned accounts has been in the region of £2M and rising. The Council has through learning implemented changes to policies and procedures as well as training. The three outstanding accounts are expected to be signed off by September 2024.

**11.2 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin**

Residents have heard rumours that the administration is planning to turn the Stebondale Street football pitches, in to floodlit pitches available for hire until 9pm at night. Please could the administration confirm what their plans are for the Stebondale pitches.

**Response of Councillor Iqbal Hossain Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation**

The council is currently looking at the feasibility of installing a 9V9 3G Pitch at Stebondale, in partnership with the Football Foundation. This will replace the existing under-utilised area. The proposed facility will include floodlights and will allow the council to deliver a targeted community sport programme for

Women and Girls groups, Young people, etc. We are currently at an early stage of the feasibility, focusing on the logistics of installing such a facility. Once we know that an artificial pitch is feasible, we will start the consultation process with local residents and potential user groups, and then develop an operational plan accordingly which will include hours of use etc. Initial indicative designs are expected soon, and we anticipate beginning consultation exercises from the end of May onwards.

### **Supplementary question from Councillor Mufedah Bustin**

Residents are concerned about the floodlights. Can the lead member say when the consultation will take place?

### **Response of Councillor Iqbal Hossain Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation**

Once the feasibility study had been completed, residents and stakeholders will be consulted.

### **11.3 Question from Councillor Musthak Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member update us on progress with the recommendations following the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place in September last year?

### **Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living**

The Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge (LGA CPC) for the Council in September 2023. The report, published in December acknowledged the many positive aspects of the organisation's performance and the motivated and focused staff who work for it. The report made 18 core recommendations. These and over 70 suggestions for improvement or review embedded within the text of the LGA CPC report were brought together to comprise the content of the Council's initial response as set out in its LGA CPC action plan. This was also published in December three months earlier than required as it was considered important to demonstrate the Council's commitment to improvement. Doing so did not inhibit the contribution of others to the plan over the following weeks and months as the Action Plan is a live document and additional actions can be identified and added at any time. It did however ensure that the Council's commitment to addressing every issue highlighted by the Peer Review was transparently made and set to a timetable.

### **Supplementary question from Councillor Musthak Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member state how Members were engaged in the process and the review?

### **Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living**



All political groups and single representatives of Parties represented within the Council were briefed on the findings of the review and the action plan by the Chief Executive and all Parties continue to be free to suggest additional content.

A considerable amount of progress has and continues to be made in delivering against the actions identified. Priority focus fell on a number of critical problem areas of governance that had persisted for a number of years. These covered areas such as the backlog of council accounts awaiting external auditor sign off and the absence of published annual governance statements. These were critical issues that were identified in the Action Plan and have all now been addressed. This report sets out progress to date.

#### **11.4 Question from Councillor Asma Islam**

Could the Mayor inform me as to whether he has been in communication with Peabody HA? Peabody tenants across the borough have written to me expressing alarm about dramatic increases to service charges – With many tenants also raising poor quality maintenance and substandard conditions?

#### **Response of Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding**

Peabody is an independent housing association with a Chief Executive that is accountable to residents and the Chair of the Peabody Board.

The Mayor and council are passionate about ensuring residents receive a good quality of service and are committed to continue working with social housing providers to ensure that residents receive good quality housing services, and we will continue to work with them to understand residents' concerns and to offer support.

#### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Asma Islam**

How does the Mayor communicate with Peabody Housing Association?

#### **Response of Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding**

If there are specific issues that Councillor Islam wishes to raise on behalf of residents, then the Mayor and myself would be happy to investigate those further.

#### **11.5 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member share how much it cost the taxpayer to unsuccessfully take one of our MPs - Apsana Begum to court? Can he explain how this represented Best Value?

**Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living**

The costs of prosecuting Apsana Begum MP were:  
£18,261.00 for external counsel;  
£14,899 for the investigation team;  
£55,457.50 for Legal services.

It should be noted that the legal and investigation cost are internal costs, rather than expenditure, and legal services' time is permitted to be charged out at a rate in excess of the lawyer's salaried hourly rate.

With respect to whether this reflect best value, the Council is under a duty to protect the public purse. Social housing fraud is particularly prevalent in London and within the borough. When prosecuting offences, the Council follows the Code for Crown Prosecutors and prosecutes only where the evidential and public interest tests are met. The former test is that, viewed objectively, a court is more likely than not to convict the alleged offender. The public interest looks at matters such as the type of offence, the impact of such offending on the community, the likely sentence on conviction, and similar. The case was kept under review in accordance with the Code. It is impossible to predict the outcome of any prosecution and prosecutions may fail for any number of reasons. It would have been remiss of the Council to not prosecute Ms. Begum in circumstances where the tests in the Code for Crown Prosecutors were met.

**11.6 Question from Councillor Amy Lee**

Councillor Amy Lee was not present at the meeting to ask her question.

**11.7 Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury**

Mr Speaker can the Lead Member tell us what steps have been taken to collect the money owed to the Council, from the Rich Mix Centre. The Rich Mix was loaned a substantial amount of taxpayers money under a previous Labour administration, and it is understood whilst this loan remains unpaid more money was given to the organisation under the last Mayor. It will help to provide precise figures and an explanation as to how this constituted Best Value?

**Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living**

From the records available, the Council made a soft loan to "Rich Mix" which was be repaid as part of a settlement. The amount was approximately £1M which was approved by the former Mayor John Biggs. The details of the legal settlement are yet to be confirmed.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury**

Can the lead member state what outstanding amount was written off and what the grounds for the write-off were?

**Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living**

Approximately £850,000 were loaned to Rich Mix. Details of what has been paid back, what is outstanding and what has been written off are unknown and would need to be investigated further. The Councillor would be right to call for a public enquiry regarding this loan and settlement.

**11.8 Question from Councillor Asma Begum**

Councillor Asma Begum was not present at the meeting to ask her question.

**11.9 Question from Councillor Harun Miah**

Mr Speaker, I want to start by thanking the Police, council and community groups for keeping our borough safe and cohesive despite attempts by a minority to portray Tower Hamlets as a No-Go area - which is utter rubbish.

Can the Lead Member share feedback from the council's Tension Monitoring Group in relation to the Palestine Flags, can he tell us how many complaints have been received and what action was taken?

**Response of Councillor Abu Talha Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**

The Tension Monitoring Group has existed for several years and has been critical in managing tensions that emerge in the community due to local, national, and international incidents. Since the start of the conflict in the middle east, the Tension Monitoring Group has discussed matters arising from the placement of flags and a number of different views have been expressed in the meetings.

There have been approximately 346 queries/complaints since October 2023. The action taken was determined on an individual basis depending on the context of the placement.

**11.10 Question from Councillor Rebakah Sultana**

Could the lead member update us on the progress of the Council's Women's commission and inform us how it will work in relation to the operations of the council?

**Response of Councillor Suluk Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion**

The Women's Commission was formally launched during International Women's Day Awards Ceremony on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The focus of the Commission is to work as a partnership to identify the key issues for women in the borough and to produce a report setting out recommendations for consideration by the Council and partners. This will ensure that women's voices are heard and support them to take up positions of influence and leadership in the community.

The Commission will focus on the following areas of inequalities faced by women in the borough:

- High Unemployment.
- Health Inequalities including maternity care.
- Community/women's Safety
- Lack of females in leadership positions.

#### **11.11 Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan**

Can the Lead Member provide an update with timelines on the insourcing of Tower Hamlets leisure services from GLL?

#### **Response of Councillor Iqbal Hossain Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation**

The timelines for insourcing Leisure Centres across to LBTH.

- GLL (Better Leisure) contract finishes – Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April
- LBTH – Be Well contract starts – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May
- Welcome event at York Hall – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May
- All Leisure Centres closed for mobilisation – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May
- Communications and launch event – Mile End Leisure Centre & Stadium – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May

#### **Supplementary question Councillor Ahmodur Khan**

Can the lead member clarify if staffing levels will be maintained or will there be a small cut?

#### **Response of Councillor Iqbal Hossain Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation**

There has been a small shortfall of staff, however mitigation action has been taken and the service will be fully staffed.

#### **11.12 Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain**

Could the lead member inform me of what steps are being taken to communicate with residents regarding the changes to leisure services and reassure them that they will still receive the same services in the interim?

**Response of Councillor Iqbal Hossain Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation**

We have made sure communications have been sent to residents and members regarding the insourcing of Leisure Centres.

- From 10 March, Our East End article circulated highlighting the justifications for insourcing, what the changeover process will involve and upcoming offers
- From 27 March 'coming soon' webpage live on the Be Well website with clear FAQs on the changeover process for memberships and direct debits etc
- From end of March/across April, messaging across social media channels, resident, member and headteachers newsletters and council WhatsApp group, on the new brand, changeover process and directing to FAQs
- From 27 March Be Well inbox/contact form open for queries

**Supplementary question from Councillor Shubo Hussain**

Has there been any consultation with residents in Bromley South?

**Response of Councillor Iqbal Hossain Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation**

We didn't consult on a ward-by-ward basis but have listened and invited different groups and will continue to do so whilst we insource the leisure service.

**11.13 Question from Councillor Abdul Malik**

Can the lead member provide an update on the outcome of refreshed Local Plan consultation and if possible, outline any significant changes which will help bring investment and the delivery of affordable housing?

**Response of Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding**

The Local Plan has a number of statutory requirements over the 3 years it takes to produce. We are making good progress with the drafting and consultation milestones and are on track to submit to the Secretary of State in February 2025, with the aim of adopting later the same year.

In Nov-Dec 2023 the Local Plan team undertook a 6-week consultation on the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan. This consultation used a combination of in person and online events alongside use of print and social media to engage widely with our residents, statutory consultees and other stakeholders. The feedback received through the consultation has been used to shape the emerging Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. A Consultation Statement which summarises in fuller, the details of the Regulation 18 consultation will be published alongside the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

**11.14 Question from James King**

What steps has the council taken to address the continuous vandalism of cars down Milligan Street and around Limehouse Causeway and Narrow Street?

**Response of Councillor Abu Talha Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**

The Police and the Council have received reports of vehicle crime and criminal damage in this location. Our officers are working closely with the Met Police to address this crime through the deployment of our resources, engagement with local residents and businesses to prevent and deter this criminality.

**We are:**

Sharing information and working in partnership with the Police to identify all the hotspot locations.

Directing our Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers to carry out proactive targeted patrols to provide a visible presence, to prevent and deter any further incidents from occurring.

Submitted a request through our joint operational tasking process with the Police for additional police resources to target this criminality.

Liasing with residents & local businesses to provide advice & guidance on reporting crime to the Police.

Offering advice on crime prevention methods along with obtaining any evidence to support the police with any criminal investigation/s.

Utilising our CCTV - a deployable CCTV camera has been installed a known hotspot to help us capture evidence to support the criminal investigation.

Utilising communications and messaging – posters and signs that will be installed in affected areas to remind residents to ensure their vehicles are locked and valuables are out of sight. The posters are designed to act as a deterrent for perpetrators who wish to commit car crime in that location.

**Supplementary question from Councillor James King**

Can the lead member tell me when the CCTV cameras were installed?

**Response of Councillor Abu Talha Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**

The cameras were installed over the last two-weeks. The Police and the Council will be reviewing any footage and will take action where necessary. At present no decision as come of it.

Questions 11.15 to 11.23 were not put due to lack of time. Written responses are attached as an Appendix to these minutes).

## 12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

### 12.1 Motion on Tower Hamlets – A Go-To Borough

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda on Tower Hamlets – A Go-to Borough that had been moved by Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury and seconded by Councillor Kabir Ahmed.

Following debate, the motion moved by Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury was put to the vote and was unanimously **agreed**.

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

#### **This Council notes:**

- The overwhelmingly positive role that the cooperation and coexistence communities in our borough has played in the identity, spirit and development of Tower Hamlets.
- The integral and invaluable role that migrants, refugees, and asylum-seeking peoples have played in shaping the history and culture of Tower Hamlets.
- That those fleeing tyranny, oppression and war – whether they Jewish communities; Huguenots; the Irish, Caribbean, Bangladeshi, and Southeast Asian communities; or Somali communities and many others – have always been welcomed into this Borough, enriched our community, and thrived.
- That the contribution of these communities to the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of the Borough have changed its identity for the better.
- That in Tower Hamlets, we enjoy very strong community cohesion, with many different groups living side by side. Our Annual Residents Survey found that 87% of residents said that Tower Hamlets is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- That these communities have stood together and fought against racism and hatred in every generation: from the Irish, Jewish and working-class cockneys who stood bravely against the fascist Blackshirts in the 1930s; to the Caribbean community that fought against racism in the 50s and 60s; the Bangladeshi and South East Asian community – including the Mayor and many members from across the chamber –

who faced down the National Front in the 70s and 80s; and the broad coalition of communities that expelled the EDL in the 2010s.

- That from Wapping to Whitechapel; Bow to Bethnal Green; and Canary Wharf to Limehouse, these communities have made all areas of Tower Hamlets a 'go-to' place to be. Through art; cuisine; community projects; history; and the mixing and sharing of cultures, this borough exemplifies the best of London, and is a shining example of how diversity and respect brings out the best of residents and their areas.

**This Council believes:**

- That recent comments about our borough – underpinned by ignorance; Islamophobia; and division – could not be further from the truth.
- Tower Hamlets has and should always be a borough where the poor, the tired, the oppressed, and the hungry can come and know they will be welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.
- That our borough's diversity and openness represents the best of humanity, and demonstrates that tolerance, respect, and understanding will always produce caring and cooperative places for people to live.
- That regardless of religion, skin colour, sexual orientation, gender, or belief system, Tower Hamlets will always be a safe place for all its residents.

**This Council resolves:**

- To produce an exhibition showcasing the rich history of diversity, integration and migration to Tower Hamlets, to be showcased in the new Town Hall.
- To invite any individual from Westminster especially those in any doubt to see the positive benefits of this migration and diversity of cultures to come for a tour of Tower Hamlets, to see first-hand the real values that underpin our borough.
- To build on the borough's work with organisations that support and protect the poorest, migrants and refugees.
- To work with communities and external stakeholders to develop and enhance its institutional knowledge in protecting and promoting refugees and asylum-seeking people, strengthen our social inclusion work to build links with marginalised communities, building on the good work of the existing Refugee and Families teams, and to ensure that these new communities can feel as accepted and integrated into the cultural and social fabric of our borough as the scores that preceded them.



- To work with boroughs and authorities across London and the country to protect migrants, refugees, and asylum-seeking people from hostile environments.
- That this administration and Council will continue to promote inclusivity; cooperation; and respect between and amongst all its communities and will always stand up against any division or attacks on our borough.
- To officially state its wish to be designated a 'Borough of Sanctuary' – cementing its commitment to inclusivity, tolerance, and dignity for all people.

The meeting ended at 10.14 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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# Minute Item 11

## Appendix A

### Item 11: Member Questions and Answers

11.1	<b>Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain</b>	<p>Can the Lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts which were left unsigned for 6 consecutive years under the previous administration.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>All accounts up to and including 2019/20 have been signed off. The 3 remaining outstanding years (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) have now all been published and are expected to be signed off by the auditors by September 2024.</p>
11.2	<b>Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin</b>	<p>Residents have heard rumours that the administration is planning to turn the Stebondale Street football pitches, in to floodlit pitches available for hire until 9pm at night. Please could the administration confirm what their plans are for the Stebondale pitches.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council is currently looking at the feasibility of installing a 9V9 3G Pitch at Stebondale, in partnership with the Football Foundation. This will replace the existing under-utilised area. The proposed facility will include floodlights and will allow the council to deliver a targeted community sport programme for Women and Girls groups, Young people, etc. We are currently at an early stage of the feasibility, focusing on the logistics of installing such a facility. Once we know that an artificial pitch is feasible, we will start the consultation process with local residents and potential user groups, and then develop an operational plan accordingly which will include hours of use etc. Initial indicative designs are expected soon, and we anticipate beginning consultation exercises from the end of May onwards.</p>

<p>11.3</p>	<p><b>Question from</b> <b>Councillor Musthak</b> <b>Ahmed</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member update us on progress with the recommendations following the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place in September last year?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge (LGA CPC) for the Council in September 2023. The report, published in December acknowledged the many positive aspects of the organisation’s performance and the motivated and focused staff who work for it. The report made 18 core recommendations. These and over 70 suggestions for improvement or review embedded within the text of the LGA CPC report were brought together to comprise the content of the Council’s initial response as set out in its LGA CPC action plan. This was also published in December three months earlier than required as it was considered important to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to improvement. Doing so did not inhibit the contribution of others to the plan over the following weeks and months as the Action Plan is a live document and additional actions can be identified and added at any time. It did however ensure that the Council’s commitment to addressing every issue highlighted by the Peer Review was transparently made and set to a timetable. All political groups and single representatives of Parties represented within the Council were briefed on the findings of the review and the action plan by the Chief Executive and all Parties continue to be free to suggest additional content.</p> <p>A considerable amount of progress has and continues to be made in delivering against the actions identified. Priority focus fell on a number of critical problem areas of governance that had persisted for a number of years. These covered areas such as the backlog of council accounts awaiting external auditor sign off and the absence of published annual governance statements. These were critical issues that were identified in the Action Plan and have all now been addressed. This report sets out progress to date.</p>
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		<p><b>Overall Progress.</b></p> <p>39% of the total number of actions identified by the Plan have now been completed. All of the listed actions have been completed for 17% of the core recommendations (3 of 18). The Council is on track to have completed 65% of all currently listed actions by the end of May and 85% by August 2024. The LGA CPC team will be returning in August to review progress. If additional actions are added these estimated completion rates may change. All target dates within the Plan may be subject to movement as individual projects develop.</p>
11.4	<p><b>Question from Councillor Asma Islam</b></p>	<p>Could the Mayor inform me as to whether he has been in communication with Peabody HA? Peabody tenants across the borough have written to me expressing alarm about dramatic increases to service charges – With many tenants also raising poor quality maintenance and substandard conditions?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Peabody is an independent housing association with a Chief Executive that is accountable to residents and the Chair of the Peabody Board.</p> <p>The Mayor and council are passionate about ensuring residents receive a good quality of service and are committed to continue working with social housing providers to ensure that residents receive good quality housing services, and we will continue to work with them to understand residents' concerns and to offer support.</p>
11.5	<p><b>Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member share how much it cost the taxpayer to unsuccessfully take one of our MPs - Apsana Begum to court? Can he explain how this represented Best Value?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p>

		<p>The costs of prosecuting Apsana Begum MP were:  £18,261.00 for external counsel;  £14,899 for the investigation team;  £55,457.50 for Legal services.</p> <p>It should be noted that the legal and investigation cost are internal costs, rather than expenditure, and legal services' time is permitted to be charged out at a rate in excess of the lawyer's salaried hourly rate.</p> <p>With respect to whether this reflect best value, the Council is under a duty to protect the public purse. Social housing fraud is particularly prevalent in London and within the borough. When prosecuting offences, the Council follows the Code for Crown Prosecutors and prosecutes only where the evidential and public interest tests are met. The former test is that, viewed objectively, a court is more likely than not to convict the alleged offender. The public interest looks at matters such as the type of offence, the impact of such offending on the community, the likely sentence on conviction, and similar. The case was kept under review in accordance with the Code. It is impossible to predict the outcome of any prosecution and prosecutions may fail for any number of reasons. It would have been remiss of the Council to not prosecute Ms. Begum in circumstances where the tests in the Code for Crown Prosecutors were met.</p>
11.6	<p><b>Question from Councillor Amy Lee</b></p>	<p>Can the lead member explain why there has been a delay to free community care? And when residents can expect Aspire to deliver on a key manifesto promise?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Mayor's Manifesto made a pledge to return to universal free homecare within the life of this administration. We are on track to do that, with plans underway to introduce free community care from the financial year 2025-2026. This is a realistic and achievable date for implementation given the planning required to implement this change</p>

		including updating the charging policy, changes to the financial assessment process on IT systems, training and communications to residents, staff, and partners.
11.7	<b>Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury</b>	<p>Mr Speaker can the Lead Member tell us what steps have been taken to collect the money owed to the Council, from the Rich Mix Centre. The Rich Mix was loaned a substantial amount of taxpayers money under a previous Labour administration, and it is understood whilst this loan remains unpaid more money was given to the organisation under the last Mayor. It will help to provide precise figures and an explanation as to how this constituted Best Value?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>A verbal response was provided and is set out in the main minutes.</p>
11.8	<b>Question from Councillor Asma Begum</b>	<p>Could the lead member inform me as to how the insourcing of THH and Leisure services will affect the council's commitment to reach net-zero by 2030?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The insourcing of the leisure service and THH gives the council opportunity to incorporate the council's net zero carbon ambitions into our housing and leisure asset strategies. There are grants available from the government to part-fund decarbonisation of both social housing and other council buildings, although the level of funding available is not sufficient to meet the total cost. As part leisure insourcing programme, the council's property and major programmes team have commissioned detailed condition surveys of our leisure facilities and developed a 10-year asset investment plan. This includes the replacement of existing heating systems and so there is an opportunity to consider the most appropriate and cost-effective way of incorporating net zero carbon technology. In terms of the council's</p>

		housing stock, surveys have been completed across the housing portfolio and opportunities to reduce emissions have been identified.
11.9	<b>Question from Councillor Harun Miah</b>	<p>Mr Speaker, I want to start by thanking the Police, council and community groups for keeping our borough safe and cohesive despite attempts by a minority to portray Tower Hamlets as a No-Go area - which is utter rubbish.</p> <p>Can the Lead Member share feedback from the council's Tension Monitoring Group in relation to the Palestine Flags, can he tell us how many complaints have been received and what action was taken?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Tension Monitoring Group has existed for several years and has been critical in managing tensions that emerge in the community due to local, national, and international incidents. Since the start of the conflict in the middle east, the Tension Monitoring Group has discussed matters arising from the placement of flags and a number of different views have been expressed in the meetings.</p> <p>There have been approximately 346 queries/complaints since October 2023. The action taken was determined on an individual basis depending on the context of the placement.</p>
11.10	<b>Question from Councillor Rebakah Sultana</b>	<p>Could the lead member update us on the progress of the Council's Women's commission and inform us how it will work in relation to the operations of the council?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Women's Commission was formally launched during International <u>Women's Day Awards Ceremony</u> on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.</p>



The focus of the Commission is to work as a partnership to identify the key issues for women in the borough and to produce a report setting out recommendations for consideration by the Council and partners. This will ensure that women's voices are heard and support them to take up positions of influence and leadership in the community.

The Commission will focus on the following areas of inequalities faced by women in the borough:

- High Unemployment.
- Health Inequalities including maternity care.
- Community/women's Safety
- Lack of females in leadership positions.

**How the Commission will work**

- **Commissioners** The council will appoint ten commissioners based on their skills and experience and ensuring diverse representation reflective of the community. Three residents representatives will be recruited through an open recruitment process which includes application and interviews. The application for resident commissioners opened on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and closed on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024. We have received really positive response with 32 applications. Shortlisting is underway. The shortlisting and interviews are being led by the Mayor's Advisor on Women and Equalities alongside officers from Mayor's Office. The resident commissioners will support engagement with a diverse range of women reflecting the diversity of women in the borough.
- **Call-for evidence** – invite women to submit written submissions on issues impacting them.
- **Thematic Commission meetings - Local** organisations will be asked to be part of the big conversation and we will consider what can be learnt from best practice.
- **Focus Groups** – Commissioners to meet with a diverse range of women across the borough. This will add richer,

		<p>greater depth to our understanding and help inform and steer the formal evidence sessions and shape recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Draft recommendations &amp; Report</b> – The Commission will report its findings and recommendations to the Council and partners</li> </ul> <p><b>Commission Findings:</b></p> <p>The Council consider the recommendations from the Commission and a fully costed action plan will then be developed to deliver against the recommendations. As part of the engagement work on the Commission the draft recommendations will be the subject of further consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure they are smart and deliverable and help address the recommendations of the Commission. The action plan will be developed by the Council and agreed at Cabinet.</p>
11.11	<p><b>Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member provide an update with timelines on the insourcing of Tower Hamlets leisure services from GLL?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Please see below timelines for insourcing Leisure Centres across to LBTH.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLL (Better Leisure) contract finishes – Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April</li> <li>• LBTH – Be Well contract starts – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May</li> <li>• Welcome event at York Hall – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May</li> <li>• All Leisure Centres closed for mobilisation – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May</li> <li>• Communications and launch event – Mile End Leisure Centre &amp; Stadium – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May</li> </ul>

<p>11.12</p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain</b></p>	<p>Could the lead member inform me of what steps are being taken to communicate with residents regarding the changes to leisure services and reassure them that they will still receive the same services in the interim?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Please see below details of communications sent to residents and members regarding the insourcing of Leisure Centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 10 March, Our East End article circulated highlighting the justifications for insourcing, what the changeover process will involve and upcoming offers</li> <li>• From 27 March 'coming soon' webpage live on the Be Well website with clear FAQs on the changeover process for memberships and direct debits etc</li> <li>• From end of March/across April, messaging across social media channels, resident, member and headteachers newsletters and council WhatsApp group, on the new brand, changeover process and directing to FAQs</li> <li>• From 27 March Be Well inbox/contact form open for queries</li> <li>• On 28 March, joint GLL/Be Well newsletter sent out to members detailing upcoming changeover process</li> <li>• On 1 April, leisure insourcing article on the LBTH website on the new service, brand and offers – subsequently promoted across social platforms</li> <li>• On 1 April, LBTH insourcing webpage for residents updated</li> <li>• W/c 22 April, coming soon campaign launched across Be Well social media channels signposting to all relevant information for the next few months – including paid promotion and Google Ads</li> <li>• W/c 22 April, messaging across external digital screens (Idea Stores, Town Hall, Youth Centres, Family hubs etc)</li> <li>• W/c 29 April, WhatsApp groups content and assets to be shared, plus continued social promotion</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 29 April, second joint mailer GLL/Be Well newsletter sent out to members detailing upcoming changeover process</li> <li>• Block bookers mailer sent out</li> <li>• From 7 May, official launch campaign rolled out across social media platforms and newsletters.</li> </ul>
11.13	<p><b>Question from Councillor Abdul Malik</b></p>	<p>Can the lead member provide an update on the outcome of refreshed Local Plan consultation and if possible, outline any significant changes which will help bring investment and the delivery of affordable housing?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Local Plan has a number of statutory requirements over the 3 years it takes to produce. We are making good progress with the drafting and consultation milestones and are on track to submit to the Secretary of State in February 2025, with the aim of adopting later the same year.</p> <p><b>Consultation:</b></p> <p>In Nov-Dec 2023 the Local Plan team undertook a 6-week consultation on the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan. This consultation used a combination of in person and online events alongside use of print and social media to engage widely with our residents, statutory consultees and other stakeholders. The feedback received through the consultation has been used to shape the emerging Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. A Consultation Statement which summarises in fuller, the details of the Regulation 18 consultation will be published alongside the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.</p> <p><b>Delivering affordable housing:</b></p> <p>Through the Reg 18 consultation there were numerous comments on the Local Plan, including for housing and site allocations (which</p>

		<p>include housing as a key use). There were no significant changes required to housing policies in light of comments.</p> <p>To recap, the policy position is to ensure a deliverable land supply for new homes over the plan period and to attain the highest level of affordable housing requirement possible. The emerging Local Plan will include over 30 allocated sites, each with a capacity to deliver above 500 new homes. These allocated sites offer investment security for their development and delivery. The Plan's affordable housing requirement increases to 40% from the 35% as is required by the adopted Local and London Plan. In addition, a requirement of a higher proportion of social rental products (85% of all new affordable homes) and family size homes is also included. The development industry queried these requirements from a viability perspective, however they have been reviewed through a full viability assessment and are considered robust. Residents support these policies.</p> <p>To supplement both the site allocations and housing policies, refinement work has been undertaken on the Plan's Tall Building Zone F. This is to ensure surety and the avoidance of land use tensions when bringing forward residential development within this zone.</p>
<p><b>11.14</b></p>	<p><b>Question from James King</b></p>	<p>What steps has the council taken to address the continuous vandalism of cars down Milligan Street and around Limehouse Causeway and Narrow Street?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Police and the Council have received reports of vehicle crime and criminal damage in this location. Our officers are working closely with the Met Police to address this crime through the deployment of our resources, engagement with local residents and businesses to prevent and deter this criminality.</p> <p><b>We are:</b></p>

		<p>Sharing information and working in partnership with the Police to identify all the hotspot locations.</p> <p>Directing our Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers to carry out proactive targeted patrols to provide a visible presence, to prevent and deter any further incidents from occurring.</p> <p>Submitted a request through our joint operational tasking process with the Police for additional police resources to target this criminality. Liasing with residents &amp; local businesses to provide advice &amp; guidance on reporting crime to the Police.</p> <p>Offering advice on crime prevention methods along with obtaining any evidence to support the police with any criminal investigation/s. Utilising our CCTV - a deployable CCTV camera has been installed a known hotspot to help us capture evidence to support the criminal investigation.</p> <p>Utilising communications and messaging – posters and signs that will be installed in affected areas to remind residents to ensure their vehicles are locked and valuables are out of sight. The posters are designed to act as a deterrent for perpetrators who wish to commit car crime in that location.</p>
<p><b>11.15</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir</b></p>	<p>Last Ramadan there were numerous complaints of anti-social behaviour, illegal trading and people fighting in the streets at the back of East London Mosque during and after night prayers. We saw videos of young people wielding machetes and terrified women and children running into the mosque for safety. Can the Lead Member set out what action will be taken to prevent the scenes we saw last year and stop prohibited activities in the vicinity?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p>

Prior to the Holy month of Ramadan this year, we worked in partnership with East London Mosque, Police, stakeholders, and other key partners to co-produce an operational action plan to address the ASB. These proactive and preventative measures ensured that everyone was able to enjoy a safe and peaceful Ramadan.

**Our Plan included:**

The identification of those responsible for the land where the illegal street trading had historically taken place. Proactive engagement and early communications with them.

Offering crime prevention and reporting ASB/crime advice for residents and visitors in advance - leaflets were produced and distributed prior to & during Ramadan advising people on how they can stay safe and report incidents of ASB & Crime to the Council and the Police.

The Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers and the Police provided a highly visible and reassuring presence around the Whitechapel area to prevent any ASB occurring in the first place.

The parking enforcement team were active in ensuring that any vehicles parked illegally and dangerously were addressed and/or towed away. This helped with the flow of traffic.

We have received positive feedback about the work and all actions taken from the local community, local women in the community, the worshippers and from ELM as well.

Plans are already progressing for next year's Holy month of Ramadan. The Council is currently considering and is consulting on the possibility of a new 'Public Space Protection Order' to further address and prevent issues arising next year.

<p>11.16</p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah</b></p>	<p>Could the Lead Member consider whether a dog park could be installed at Wapping Rose Gardens? Residents have written to me suggesting that a designated space for dogs would benefit the whole community with our canine friends being able to exercise in a space for them and residents reassured that their green spaces are clean and safe for everyone.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>A response was provided to Cllr Ullah in August 2023 to advise that whilst Wapping Gardens and Rose Gardens are popular areas for dog walking, there are processes that would need to be followed for us to consider creating a dog exercise area. This would include conducting a consultation and identifying capital funding.</p> <p>We have advised that should a dog exercise area be implemented then presently there would be no legal requirement for dog users to use the facility.</p> <p>Currently the Council is undertaking a review of dog control measures. Recommendations from this review will be subject to wider Council approval and will inform any future enforcement measures that may be implemented in parks and open spaces. Therefore, it is recommended that this review is concluded to inform any additional amenities / resources invested into parks and open spaces.</p>
<p>11.17</p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Bellal Uddin</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member provide an update on the regeneration of the Clichy Estate (known as HAP) which will see around 400 homes being built? It is understood the scheme has progressed significantly under the current Mayor and it will help to share where we are to date and work going forward.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p>



		<p>The HAP Regeneration Scheme near the Clichy Estate is the council's largest housing development. It will provide 407 much-needed new homes, a community centre and more. Significant progress has been made over the last year.</p> <p>An amended design has been prepared for the scheme and a planning application submitted in March incorporating the latest building safety standards announced by the Government in 2023, requiring all flats have a secondary means of escape and other measures to improve fire safety. The proposed community centre is also relocated, to become a stand-alone facility, making it better suited to the community's needs.</p> <p>A procurement exercise is currently underway to select a developer partner to take the scheme forward into the construction phase and an appointment is expected this summer. This will then see an initial announcement of a developer being appointed that will enable demolition take place in 2024.</p>
11.18	<p><b>Question from Councillor Rachel Blake</b></p>	<p>Can the lead member inform me what is the average waiting time for housing OT assessments in each of past two years please?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The most recent figures available confirm that the current average waiting time for a Housing Occupational Health assessment is 4.5 months with the longest being 8 months and the shortest being less than a week.</p> <p>Waiting times can be influenced by a number of factors including residents' availability to inspect and information requests from health professionals.</p>

		<p>Occupational Therapists also undertake additional duties related to council new build; input on planning applications, site visits and accompanied viewings for residents on Project 120.</p> <p>The service has recently recruited 2 x apprentices to provide admin support to free up Occupational Therapist time to concentrate on assessments.</p> <p>A planned service restructure/review will examine increased capacity in this area.</p>
11.19	<p><b>Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled</b></p>	<p>I understand the independent investigation, initiated by 31 members of staff, into housing management across housing options and homelessness has concluded, can the Lead Member share the findings and recommendations?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Julie Lorraine (CD Resources) is currently actively in discussions with the trade unions and staff to ensure that recommendations lead to actions which meet the needs of the staff and sustainably support their wellbeing.</p>
11.20	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar</b></p>	<p>Could the lead member inform me of progress of development of the Clichy Estate?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The HAP Regeneration Scheme near the Clichy Estate is the council's largest housing development. It will provide 407 much-needed new homes, a community centre and more. Significant progress has been made over the last year.</p> <p>An amended design has been prepared for the scheme and a planning application submitted in March incorporating the latest</p>

		<p>building safety standards announced by the Government in 2023, requiring all flats have a secondary means of escape and other measures to improve fire safety. The proposed community centre is also relocated, to become a stand alone facility, making it better suited to the community's needs.</p> <p>A procurement exercise is currently underway to select a developer partner to take the scheme forward into the construction phase and an appointment is expected this summer. This will then see an initial announcement of a developer being appointed that will enable demolition take place in 2024.</p>
11.21	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam</b></p>	<p>Could the lead member inform me of whether the council is communicating with relevant partners and reassuring THCH residents now that the proposed merger with Poplar Harca has reportedly ended?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The lead member has met with Poplar HARCA and is due to meet with lead representatives of THCH alongside the Mayor in the forthcoming weeks.</p> <p>Post meeting with THCH the council will endeavour to publish a more robust and comprehensive statement for residents once further information and clarity has been sought from all parties involved. The council will discuss the ramifications for the residents as well as the next steps for both landlords.</p> <p>For the interim the council has updated the merger statement on the webpage as of 18<sup>th</sup> April for borough residents.</p> <p>In addition, both Landlords have updated their websites and social media channels informing residents of the dissolution of merger and provided FAQ links to reassure residents concerned.</p>

11.22	<p><b>Question from Councillor Marc Francis</b></p>	<p>Will the Mayor and Lead Member update Full Council on the action that has been taken in the past two years to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists at the mini roundabout at the junction of Tredegar Road and Fairfield Road?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>We are committed to improving the safety of pedestrians and cyclists throughout the borough.</p> <p>During the Liveable Street Bow programme, a scheme for the Tredegar Road / Fairfield Road was developed. Since the project was cancelled, no further plans have been made to implement changes at the junction.</p> <p>This location is not currently on any work programmes. However, given the volume of traffic and potential for crossing improvements, this is a location we can revisit to consider inclusion as part of future works programmes, subject to agreement and securing of funding.</p>
11.23	<p><b>Question from Councillor Peter Golds</b></p>	<p>Would the Mayor confirm as to whether there were discussions between the administration, either members or officers or both, and the Regulator with respect to the proposed merger between THCH and Poplar Harca?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Although there was no direct contact made with RSH, when the proposed merger was made public, the Mayor wrote a formal letter asking for the regulator to dissuade THCH joining a larger housing organisation solely determined by a fiscal rationale.</p> <p>The Mayor reiterated resident's feelings were a key aspect in any merger where proposed as the only viable outcome. The Mayor noted</p>

		<p>numerous residents indicated to him they were fearful of their voices being diluted or becoming absent if THCH were amalgamated into a much larger organisation.</p>
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Additionally, the Mayor stated any incoming landlord must ensure promises made are kept. Thus, establishing trust and confidence in residents who at present feel they have been provided with an enduring substandard housing service.

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## Executive Procedure Rules

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Rule	Subject
1	How Does the Executive Operate?
2	How are Executive Meetings Conducted?
3	The Mayor's Executive Scheme of Delegation

#### 1. HOW DOES THE EXECUTIVE OPERATE?

##### 1.1 Who May Make Executive Decisions?

In law, functions which are the responsibility of the Executive may be exercised by

- (a) The Mayor
- (b) The Executive as a whole (the Cabinet);
- (c) A Committee of the Executive;
- (d) An individual Member of the Executive;
- (e) The Chief Executive, a Chief Officer or an officer;
- (f) An area Committee; or a ward councillor in accordance with Section 236 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;
- (g) joint arrangements; or
- (h) another local authority;

subject to the Mayor or this Constitution giving delegated authority to the person/meeting listed to discharge the particular function.

The arrangements for the discharge of executive functions at Tower Hamlets are set out in the executive arrangements adopted by the Council (as set out in Part A, Section 8 of this Constitution) and the Executive Scheme of Delegation at Rule 3 of these Rules.

Currently decisions on executive functions are taken by the Mayor, either at the Cabinet meeting or separately, unless the Mayor has delegated either a function as set out in those parts of the Constitution or a specific executive decision.

## **1.2 The Executive Scheme of Delegation and Executive Functions**

At the Annual Meeting of the Council the Mayor will present to the Council a written record of delegations made by the Mayor ('The Executive Scheme of Delegation') for inclusion in the Council's Constitution. The document presented by the Mayor must contain the following information in so far as it relates to executive functions:

- (a) The extent of any authority delegated to any individual Executive Member or ward Councillor including details of the limitation on their authority.
- (b) The terms of reference and constitution of such Executive Committees as the Mayor appoints and the names of Executive Members appointed to them.
- (c) The nature and extent of any delegation of executive functions to area Committees, any other authority or any joint arrangements and the names of those Executive Members appointed to any joint Committee for the coming year.
- (d) The nature and extent of any delegation of executive functions to officers not already specified in Part B of this Constitution, with details of any limitation on that delegation and the title of the officer to whom the delegation is made.

The Mayor may amend or revoke any delegation of an Executive function at any time.

The Executive Scheme of Delegation shall be included at Rule 3 of these Rules.

Within five working days of agreeing any change to the Executive Scheme of Delegation, a Cabinet appointment or portfolio, the Mayor shall present a written record of the change that they have agreed, together with the reasons for that change, to the Monitoring Officer.

Whenever the Monitoring Officer receives notification from the Mayor of any change(s) to the Executive Scheme of Delegation, Cabinet appointment(s) or portfolio(s), the Monitoring Officer will inform all Councillors of the change(s) made and any reasons given by the Mayor.

## **1.3 Sub-Delegation of Executive Functions**

- (a) Where the Mayor, the Executive, a Committee of the Executive or an individual Member of the Executive is responsible for an executive function, they may delegate further to an area Committee, joint arrangements or an officer.
- (b) Unless the Mayor or Cabinet directs otherwise, if the Mayor delegates functions to the Executive then the Executive may delegate further to a Committee of the Executive or an officer.



- (c) Unless the Mayor directs otherwise, a Committee of the Executive to whom functions have been delegated may delegate further to an officer.
- (d) Even where executive functions have been delegated, that fact does not prevent the discharge of delegated functions by the person or body who delegated them.

#### **1.4 The Council's Scheme of Delegation and Executive Functions**

- (a) Subject to (b) below, the Council's Scheme of Delegation will be subject to adoption by the Council and may only be amended by the Council. It will contain the details required in Part A, Section 8.
- (b) The Mayor may amend the Scheme of Delegation of executive functions at any time during the year. To do so, the Mayor must give written notice to the Monitoring Officer and the person, body or Committee concerned. The notice must set out the extent of the amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, and whether it entails the withdrawal of delegation from any person, body or Committee or the Executive as a whole. The Monitoring Officer will inform all Councillors of the change(s) made and any reasons given by the Mayor.
- (c) Where the Mayor seeks to withdraw or amend delegations to a Committee, notice will be deemed to be served on that Committee when it has been served on its Chair.

#### **1.5 Interests**

- (a) Where a Member of the Executive has a disclosable pecuniary interest this should be dealt with as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members at Part C Section 31 of this Constitution.
- (b) If every Member of the Executive has either a registerable or non-registerable interest and either interest might appear to a fair and informed observer that there was a real possibility of the Members' judgement being or likely to be impaired by the interest then this also should be dealt with as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members in Part C Section 31 of this Constitution.
- (c) Where a Member of the Executive has either a registerable or non-registerable interest and either interest might appear to a fair and informed observer that there was a real possibility of the Member's judgement being or likely to be impaired by the interest then this should be dealt with as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members at Part C Section 31 of this Constitution.
- (d) If the exercise of an executive function has been delegated to a Committee of the Executive, an individual Member, the Chief Executive, a Chief Officer or an officer, and should a disclosable pecuniary interest arise, then the function will be exercised in the first instance by the person or body by whom the delegation was made or otherwise as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members at Part C Section 31 of this Constitution.

- (e) If the exercise of an executive function has been delegated to a Committee of the Executive, an individual Member, the Chief Executive, a Chief Officer or an officer, and should either a registerable or non-registerable interest and either interest might appear to a fair and informed observer that there was a real possibility of that person's judgement being or likely to be impaired by the interest arise, then the function will be exercised in the first instance by the person or body by whom the delegation was made or otherwise as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members at Part C Section 31 of this Constitution.

## **1.6 Meetings of the Cabinet**

- (a) Meetings of the Cabinet will be determined by the Mayor or Chief Executive. The Cabinet shall normally meet at the Council's main offices or at another location as appropriate.
- (b) Meetings of the Cabinet will be subject to the Access to Information Procedure Rules and any other relevant procedure rules in this Constitution.

## **1.7 Quorum**

The quorum for a meeting of the Executive shall be three Members of the Cabinet including the Executive Mayor, or where notified in advance to the Monitoring Officer, the Statutory Deputy Mayor'.

## **1.8 How are Decisions to be taken by the Executive?**

- (a) Executive decisions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet as a whole will be taken at a meeting convened in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in Part B of the Constitution.
- (b) Where executive decisions are delegated to a Committee of the Executive, the rules applying to executive decisions taken by them shall be the same as those applying to those taken by the Executive as a whole.

## **2. HOW ARE EXECUTIVE MEETINGS CONDUCTED?**

### **2.1 Who Presides?**

If the Mayor is present they will preside. In their absence, then the Deputy Mayor shall preside. In the absence of both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor then Cabinet is not quorate and may not meet (as set out in Paragraph 1.7).

### **2.2 Who may Attend?**

- (a) Meetings of the Cabinet will normally be open to the public unless confidential or exempt information is to be discussed.

- (b) Subject to the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part B Section 27 of this Constitution, meetings may occasionally be private.
- (c) The Chair (or Vice-Chair) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Leaders of any Opposition Groups have a standing invitation to observe Cabinet meetings.

### **2.3 What Business will be conducted?**

At each meeting of the Cabinet the following business will be conducted:

- (a) consideration of the minutes of the last meeting;
- (b) declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest, if any;
- (c) A verbal update (of no more than ten minutes) by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or nominated deputy) on the work of the Committee and also on any issues or Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions relevant to the reports for consideration on the Cabinet agenda.
- (d) matters set out in the agenda for the meeting, and which shall indicate which are key decisions and which are not, in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in Part B Section 27 of this Constitution.
- (e) consideration of reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (f) matters referred to the Executive (whether by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or by the Council) for reconsideration by the Executive in accordance with the provisions contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out in Part B Section 28 of this Constitution;

### **2.4 Community Engagement/ Consultation**

All reports to the Executive from any Member of the Executive or an officer on proposals relating to the Budget and Policy Framework must contain details of the nature and extent of community engagement or consultation with stakeholders, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the outcome of that consultation. Reports about other matters will set out the details and outcome of consultation as appropriate. The level of community engagement or consultation required will be appropriate to the nature of the matter under consideration having due regard to the Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

### **2.5 Who can put Items on the Executive Agenda?**

The Mayor and Chief Executive may put on the agenda of any Cabinet meeting any Executive matter which they wish, whether or not authority has been delegated to the Cabinet, a Committee of it, any Member, the Chief Executive,

a Chief Officer or officer in respect of that matter. The Corporate Director, Governance will comply with their requests in this respect.

The Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer may include an item for consideration on the agenda of a Cabinet meeting and may require the Chief Executive to call such a meeting in pursuance of their statutory duties. In other circumstances, where any two (2) of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer are of the opinion that a meeting of the Cabinet needs to be called to consider a matter that requires a decision, they may jointly call a meeting and include an item on the agenda of that meeting or of a Cabinet meeting which has already been called. If there is no meeting of the Cabinet soon enough to deal with the issue in question, then the person(s) entitled to include an item on the agenda may also require that a meeting be convened at which the matter will be considered.

## **2.6 Public and Member Engagement at Cabinet**

Whilst the main focus of Cabinet is as a decision-making body, there is an opportunity for the public to contribute through making submissions that specifically relate to the reports that are set out on the agenda. Members of the public may therefore make written submissions in any form (for example; Petitions, letters, written questions) and which to be submitted to the Clerk to Cabinet (whose details are on the agenda front sheet) by 5 pm the day before the meeting. The consideration of such written submissions will be at the discretion of whosoever presides at the meeting.

In addition to rights set out in 2.3(c) above, the Chair (or Vice-Chair in their absence) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Leaders of any Opposition Groups can request to raise their key issues/questions in relation to the reports on the Cabinet agenda. The Mayor or other person presiding at a meeting of the Cabinet may also at their discretion allow other persons to contribute. All requests to raise issues or ask questions must be received by the clerk to the Cabinet (whose details are on the agenda front sheet) by 5pm the day before the meeting.

All contributions to the meeting will be taken in a 15 minute question and answer session at the start of the meeting. Each contribution will normally be limited to three minutes. The Mayor or other person presiding at a meeting of the Cabinet has discretion to vary these procedures especially where there are large numbers of requests or submissions.

## **2.7 Application of Council Procedure Rules**

Rules 5 – 9, 17 to 24 of the Council Procedure Rules (Part B Section 26 of this Constitution) shall also apply to meetings of the Cabinet.

### **3. THE MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

**With effect from 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

#### **PART A - EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

##### **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this Executive Scheme of Delegation is to:-

- (a) be clear about who can make which executive decisions including Key Decisions;
- (b) facilitate the smooth running of Council business;
- (c) ensure that the Mayor is able to provide effective strategic leadership for the overall policy direction of the Council and to promote partnership working with other agencies; and that officers take responsibility for operational matters and policy implementation.

##### **2. THE CONSTITUTION**

2.1 Once presented by the Mayor to the Annual Council Meeting or to the Monitoring Officer, this Executive Scheme of Delegation will form part of the Council's Constitution and will be appended to it. Its provisions apply alongside the Council Procedure Rules (Section 26) and Access to Information Procedure Rules (Section 27) provisions included in the Constitution.

##### **3. AMENDMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

3.1 This Scheme of Delegation remains in force for the term of office of the Mayor unless and until it is amended or revoked by the Mayor in accordance with Rule 1.2 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

##### **4. NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

4.1 No delegated power in this Executive Scheme of Delegation applies to any decision that relates to a matter that is not an Executive function either by law or by the allocation of local choice functions under the Council's Constitution.

## 5. THE COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

5.1 The Executive shall consist of ten (10) people, namely the Mayor and nine (9) Cabinet Members as set out below:-

<b>Name</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>
Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)	Cllr Maium Talukdar
Resources and the Cost of Living	Cllr Saied Ahmed
Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding	Cllr Kabir Ahmed
Environment and the Climate Emergency	Cllr Shafi Ahmed
Health, Wellbeing and Social Care	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury
Jobs, Enterprise, Skills and Growth	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Equalities and Social Inclusion	Cllr Abdul Wahid
Safer Communities	Cllr Abu Talha Choudhury
Culture and Recreation	Cllr Kamrul Hussain

5.2 Where Cabinet roles are held by job share Cabinet Members one of the two councillors for the portfolio will be appointed as the official Cabinet Member who will retain official responsibility for the whole portfolio for the first six months. Following this, the second Cabinet Member will take up the official role for the second six-month period. Only the Councillor designated as the 'official' Cabinet Member at any given time may vote at the relevant meeting of Cabinet but both Job Share Members may introduce reports and take part in discussions.

5.3 Job share Cabinet Members will have day to day advisory responsibility for distinct areas of the portfolio. These responsibilities will be published on the council's website.

5.4 Special Responsibility Allowances for both job share Cabinet Members will be paid monthly with each receiving the equivalent of half a Cabinet Member SRA.

5.5 For the purposes of the Constitution, both job share Cabinet Members will be treated as if they were members of the executive. For example, they would not

be able to serve on O&S during the six months there were not the 'official' Cabinet Member.

- 5.6 The Council has the power to appoint Mayoral Advisors to give specific focus to cross cutting themes and mayoral priorities supporting and advising the Mayor and Cabinet on specific issues. Mayoral Advisors are not members of the Executive.

## **6. DELEGATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE**

- 6.1 The Mayor has not delegated his decision-making powers to the Executive acting collectively as the Cabinet. He has delegated decision-making powers to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee and also the King George's Field Charity Board as it is a Charity Body.

- 6.2 The Mayor may, in accordance with Rule 1.2 of the Executive Procedure Rules, appoint such committees of the Executive as he considers appropriate from time to time and he appoints the following at this time:

- King George's Fields Charity Board
- The Grants Determination Sub-Committee

- 6.3 Subject to the Mayor's prerogative to make decisions on all matters relating to all his statutory powers, including as individual mayoral decisions taken outside of Cabinet, the Mayor delegates to each Cabinet Member individually the power to make decisions on matters within their portfolio after consultation with the Mayor and subject to the Mayor raising no objection to the proposed decision. Any such decision by a cabinet member will be subject to a written report and the same procedure as applies to individual mayoral decisions.

- 6.4 In accordance with section 14(6) of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended), any arrangements made by the Mayor for the discharge of an executive function by an executive member, committee or officer are not to prevent the Mayor from exercising that function.

## **7. DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS**

- 7.1 The Mayor has delegated to officers decision making powers in relation to Executive functions as set out at Parts B and D of the Council's Constitution.

- 7.2 Any officer executive decision resulting in (revenue or capital) expenditure or savings over £250,000 must only be taken following consultation with the Mayor.

## **8. OTHER DELEGATIONS**

- 8.1 The Mayor has not delegated any powers to any area committee, or to any ward Councillor in accordance with section 236 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

8.2 The Mayor has delegated powers to joint arrangements with other local authorities as set out in Part A, Section 12 and Part B Section 21 of the Council's Constitution

8.3 Subject to paragraph 8.2 above, the Mayor has not delegated any powers to any other local authority.

**9. PROCESS FOR EXECUTIVE DECISION MAKING BY THE MAYOR OR A CABINET MEMBER**

9.1 The process for taking individual executive decisions, including Key Decisions, is set out in Part D Section 53.



## 53 Executive, Committee and Partnership Procedure Rules

### Procedure for Executive Decision Making by the Mayor or a Cabinet Member

1. Where an Executive decision, including a Key Decision, falls to be made and either:-
  - (a) authority to make that decision has not been delegated by the Mayor under this Executive Scheme of Delegation; or
  - (b) authority has been delegated but the person or body with delegated powers declines to exercise those powers; or
  - (c) authority has been delegated but the Mayor nevertheless decides to take the decision himself,

the decision shall be made by the Mayor individually, after consultation with the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer and such other Corporate Director(s), the Head of Paid Service or Cabinet Member(s) as required.

2. Executive decisions (including Key Decisions) to be taken by the Mayor in accordance with paragraph 1 above shall either be taken in accordance with the procedure at paragraph 5 below.:-
3. In the event that a meeting of the Executive is not quorate, the Mayor may still take any necessary decisions as Individual Mayoral Decisions having consulted any Executive members present. All Mayoral decisions taken at a formal meeting of the Executive shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
4. The Cabinet Meeting is not authorised to exercise the Mayor's powers in the absence of the Mayor. If the Mayor is unable to act for any reason, and only in those circumstances, the Statutory Deputy Mayor is authorised to exercise the Mayor's powers.
5. The Mayor may at his discretion make a decision in relation to an Executive function, including a Key Decision, alone and outside the context of a meeting of the Executive. In relation to any decision made by the Mayor under this provision:-
  - (a) The decision may only be made following consideration by the Mayor of a full report by the relevant officer(s) containing all relevant information, options and recommendations in the same format as would be required if the decision were to be taken at a meeting of the Executive;

- (b) The provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in relation to call-in, including the rules regarding urgent decisions, shall apply;
- (c) In the case of a Key Decision as defined in Section 3 of the Constitution, the provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in relation to prior publication on the Forward Plan shall apply; and
- (d) The decision shall not be made until the Mayor has confirmed his agreement by signing a Mayoral Decision Proforma (example style attached) which has first been completed with all relevant information and signed by the relevant Chief Officers.


6. All Mayoral decisions taken in accordance with paragraph 5 above shall be:-

- (b) Published on the Council's website;

save that no information that in the opinion of the Corporate Director, Governance is 'exempt' or 'confidential' as defined in the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules (Section 27) shall be published, included in the decision notice or available for public inspection.

7. Any decision taken by an individual Cabinet Member in relation to any matter delegated to them in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Mayor's Executive Scheme of Delegation shall:-

- (a) be subject to the same process and rules as a Mayoral decision in accordance with paragraphs 5 and 6 above; and
- (b) not be made until the Mayor has confirmed in writing that he has no objection to the decision.

<b>Individual Mayoral Decision Proforma</b>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
Decision Log No: (To be inserted by Democratic Services)	
<b>Report of:</b> [Insert name and title of corporate director]	<b>Classification:</b> [Unrestricted or Exempt]
<b>[Insert title here]</b>	

<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	<b>Yes / No</b> (Report author to delete as applicable)
<b>Decision Notice Publication Date:</b>	(Report author to state date of decision notice – either individual notice or within the Forward Plan)
<b>General Exception or Urgency Notice published?</b>	<b>Yes</b> (give details) / <b>Not required</b> (Report author to delete as applicable)
<b>Restrictions:</b>	(If restricted state which of the exempt/confidential criteria applies)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*(To be completed by Chief Officer seeking the decision)*

.....  
.....  
.....

Full details of the decision sought, including reasons for the recommendations and (where applicable) each of the options put forward; other options considered; background information; the comments of the Chief Finance Officer; the concurrent report of the Corporate Director, Governance; implications for Equalities; Risk Assessment; Background Documents; and other relevant matters are set out in the attached report.

**DECISION**

*(Proposed decision to be entered here)*

.....  
.....

**APPROVALS**

**1. (If applicable) Corporate Director proposing the decision or their deputy**

I approve the attached report and proposed decision above for submission to the Mayor. I confirm that the Mayor and/or Lead Member have agreed to this decision being taken using this process.

Signed ..... Date .....

**2. Chief Finance Officer or their deputy**

I have been consulted on the content of the attached report which includes my comments.

Signed ..... Date .....

**3. Monitoring Officer or their deputy**

I have been consulted on the content of the attached report which includes my comments.

(For Key Decision only – delete as applicable)

I confirm that this decision:-

(a) has been published in advance on the Council’s Forward Plan OR

(b) is urgent and subject to the ‘General Exception’ or ‘Special Urgency’ provision at paragraph 18 or 19 respectively of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Signed ..... Date .....

**4. (If the proposed decision relates to matters for which the Head of Paid Service has responsibility) Head of Paid Service**

I have been consulted on the content of the attached report which includes my comments where necessary.

Signed ..... Date .....

**5. Mayor**

I agree the decision proposed at ..... above for the reasons set out in paragraph ..... of the attached report.

Signed ..... Date .....

# Agenda Item 8

## Proposed Amendment to Agenda Item 8 – Proportionality and Allocation of Places on Committees of the Council 2024-25

**Proposed by:** Councillor Maium Talukdar

**Seconded by:** Councillor Kabir Akhmed

### Proposal:

To increase the size of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by 2 Members taking it from 9 to 11 Members.

The Proportionality calculations set out in Paragraph 3.4 would then become:

3.4 The political composition of the Council is as follows:

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>SEATS (on Council)</b>	<b>PROPORTION ON COUNCIL</b>	<b>ENTITLEMENT (to seats on Committees)</b>
Aspire	24	53.33%	<del>39.97 (40)</del> <b>41.06 (41)</b>
Labour	18	40%	<del>30 (30)</del> <b>30.8 (31)</b>
Ungrouped	3	0*	5 (remainder) – but see Para 3.5 below
	45		<del>75</del> <b>77</b>

\* Ungrouped Councillors are not included in the proportionality calculation. As two Councillors are required to form a group the Conservative, Green and Independent Councillors are included in the 'ungrouped' designation above.

Paragraph 3.5 becomes:

According to the above calculation the Aspire Group would be entitled to 41 seats on these Committees, with the Labour Group being entitled to 31 and the remaining 5 being available for ungrouped Members. However, there is also a requirement in the above Act that the Aspire Group must have a majority on every Committee. This results in their allocation increasing to 43 and the ungrouped allocation consequently reducing to 3.

The table at Paragraph 3.6 would become:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Aspire</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Ungrouped</b>
<b>Licensing Committee</b>	15	8	6	1
<b>Overview and Scrutiny (plus 2 co-optees)</b>	<b>9-11</b>	<b>5-6</b>	4	<b>1</b>
<b>General Purposes Committee</b>	9	5	3	1
<b>Strategic Development Committee</b>	9	5	<del>3</del> <b>4</b>	<del>1</del> <b>0</b>
<b>Audit Committee</b>	7	4	3	
<b>Human Resources Committee</b>	7	4	3	
<b>Development Committee</b>	7	4	3	
<b>Pensions Committee</b>	7	4	3	
<b>Standards Advisory Committee (plus 5 co- optees)</b>	5	3	2	
<b>TOTALS</b>	75	<del>42</del> <b>43</b>	<del>30</del> <b>31</b>	3

Note – these changes would result in one ungrouped place being allocated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it is now the second largest Committee (behind the Licensing Committee). The final ungrouped place is shown as being on the General Purposes Committee but Council could change this to the Strategic Development Committee should it so wish.

**Proposed Amendment to Agenda Item 9 – Appointments to Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council 2024-25**

**Proposed by:** Councillor Maium Talukdar

**Seconded by:** Councillor Kabir Akhmed

**Proposal:**

Should the proposed amendment to Agenda Item 8 (Proportionality and Allocation of Places on Committees of the Council 2024/25) be agreed (as set out earlier in this supplementary pack) to increase the size of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by 2 Members taking it from 9 to 11 Members, this amendment will be required to Appendix 1 of this report.

The Change to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as follows:

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**(Nine Eleven non-executive members of the Council plus two co-opted members)**

(NB Scrutiny Lead Members and Chairs of Sub-Committees to be appointed by the O&S Committee)

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<b><i>Aspire Group (5 6)</i></b>	<b><i>Labour Group (4)</i></b>	<b><i>Ungrouped (0 1)</i></b>	<b><i>Co-Opted Members (for information – to be appointed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee)</i></b>
Substitutes (up to 3 members):-	Substitutes (up to 3 members):-	N/A	Halima Islam Jahid Ahmed



The consequent change as shown in the amendment to Agenda Item 8 results in the Strategic Development Committee changing to Aspire 5 and Labour 4. The alternative would be making that change to the General Purposes Committee instead.

<b>STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b> (Nine members of the Council)		
<b><i>Aspire Group (5)</i></b>	<b><i>Labour Group (3 4)</i></b>	<b><i>Ungrouped (1 0)</i></b>
Substitutes (up to 3 members):-	Substitutes (up to 3 members):-	

<b>GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE</b> (Nine members of the Council)		
<b><i>Aspire Group (5)</i></b>	<b><i>Labour Group (3)</i></b>	<b><i>Ungrouped (1)</i></b>
Substitutes (up to 3 members):-	Substitutes (up to 3 members):-	

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