

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.35 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2020

**C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs	
Councillor Sirajul Islam	(Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing)
Councillor Rachel Blake	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Planning, Air Quality and Tackling Poverty)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People)
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	(Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor James King	
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	(Mayoral Advisor for Highways and Public Realm)
Councillor Andrew Wood	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor Peter Golds	

Officers Present:

Allister Bannin	(Head of Strategic and Corporate Finance)
Kevin Bartle	Interim Divisional Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit
Adam Boey	(Senior Strategy & Policy Manager - Corporate)
Stephen Bramah	(Deputy Head of the Mayor's office)
Michael Diop	Communications Officer
Asmat Hussain	(Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)
Christine McInnes	(Divisional Director, Education and Partnership, Children's)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Neville Murton	Corporate Director of Resources
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
- Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment
- Debbie Jones, Corporate Director, Children and Culture for whom Christine McInnes, Divisional Director, Education and Partnerships was deputising.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 18 December 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

There were no announcements.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided Cabinet with a brief update on Scrutiny's work and its plans to review the Mayor's draft budget proposals. The Committee had circulated a number of technical questions in relation to the budget which would help their deliberations at their upcoming meeting.

He also highlighted a number of questions in respect of the Fees and Charges report on the agenda in particular around whether the equalities impact assessments were properly looking at the overall impact of the changes rather than just each individual fees increase and also whether increases were being looked at generally to ensure they did not adversely impact the most vulnerable.

The **Mayor** thanked him for the update and agreed to continue these discussions with Overview and Scrutiny.

5.2 Any Unrestricted Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Mayor's Foreword to the Council's Budget Report

The **Mayor** introduced his Foreword to the budget. He highlighted the national and local context for the budget with significant reductions in government financial support whilst the Council was also experiencing large increases in demand for services, especially in adult and children's social care.

However, the budget also set out many areas where the Council was bringing big improvements in support to residents and was succeeding in delivering his manifesto commitments.

RESOLVED

1. To note the Mayor's Foreword to the Council's Budget.

6.2 The Council's 2020-21 Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-23

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the Council's draft budget proposals. In particular she highlighted the responses to the Council's budget consultation exercise and how those had been taken account of when drafting the budget proposals.

Members discussed the report and noted a number of issues including:

- The importance of working with Scrutiny especially on the best timing for engagement.
- The importance of clarity on who was responsible for cross-directorate savings proposals.
- The continued need for affordable housing.
- How the budget built on the Good OFSTED rating of Children's Social Care looking to improve the life chances of young people.
- The continued support for skills training for all age groups.
- The need to provide safe, secure communities and to invest in the future.
- That the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was unchanged.
- The level of Reserves was noted.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. He thanked officers and Members for their hard work in putting the budget together and the improvements to services that had been secured. He then **agreed** the report explaining that it would now be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their views. Submissions would be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 29 January before the final budget proposals were agreed and submitted to Council.

RESOLVED

1. To propose a draft General Fund Revenue Funding Requirement of £352.846m subject to any changes arising from the technical consultation and the final Local Government Finance Settlement.
2. To propose a Band D Council Tax of £1,060.35 for 2020-21 to be referred to Full Council for consideration.
3. To agree the proposal of an average housing rent increase of 2.7% based on the September 2019 Consumer Price Index plus 1% to take effect from the first rent week of April 2020. This equates to an average rent increase of £2.94 per week for 2020-21.
4. To agree the proposal that the average weekly housing tenanted service charge will increase by 2.7% from the first rent week in April 2020. This is consistent with the new Social Housing rent standard rent policy and will lead to an average weekly increase in tenanted service charges of approximately £0.23.
5. To agree the proposal that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be recommended to Council for consideration, recommending that Council agrees no changes to the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020-21.
6. To note the following:

The General Fund revenue budget for 2020-21 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-21 to 2022-23

The initial budget proposals and Council Tax for 2020-21 together with the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in Appendix 1

Budget Consultation

The outcome of consultation with business ratepayers, residents and other stakeholders as set out in Section 3.13 and Appendix 6

Funding

The funding available for 2020-21 and the indications and forecasts for future years as set out in Section 3.4.

Growth and Inflation

The risks identified from the potential growth and inflation commitments arising in 2020-21 and future years as set out in Section 3.5 & Appendix 3.

Savings

New proposed saving items to be delivered in 2020-23 as set out in Section 3.6 and Appendix 4 of the report.

Financial Risks: Reserves and Contingencies

The strategic budget risks and opportunities as set out in Section 3.7.

Reserves

The reserves policy and proposed approach to the strategic use of reserves as set out in Section 3.8.

Schools Funding

The position for schools' funding including the Dedicated Schools Budget as set out in Section 3.9.

Housing Revenue Account

The proposals for Housing Rent and Tenanted Service Charge Setting 2020-21 are set out in Section 3.10.

7. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment and specific equalities considerations as set out in Section 4 of the report.

6.3 Fees & Charges 2020-21

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She highlighted that the report set out clearly all the fees and charges and their proposed rates, including where those rates were being increased. Individual Cabinet Members had reviewed the proposals with the relevant Corporate Directors.

During discussion the **Mayor** noted the questions about the timing of the inflation calculation and on the overall equalities impact of the changes proposed. He noted that the report contained equalities information but he proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should review this area as part of its work programme in the coming year and he would welcome any proposals they had arising from that. On that basis he **agreed** the recommendations.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the proposed increase to discretionary fees and charges by a minimum of CPI (1.7%) or RPI (2.6%) rounded up to the nearest 5p, 10p etc., with effect from 1st April 2020
2. To approve proposed increases above CPI 1.7% for the following areas;
 - Arts and Music
 - Parental Engagement and Support
 - Sports & Physical Activity
 - Parking
 - Street Trading
 - Environmental Commercial Services
 - Strategic Planning - CADAP
 - Development Management - Pre-application advice

- Registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages - Marriage & Civil Partnership
 - Idea Stores Learning - Skills Funding Agency contract: non-accredited ESOL courses funded through Adult Community Learning grant
3. To approve New Charges proposed in the following areas;
- Sports & Physical Activity
 - Environmental Commercial Services - HMO Licensing and Animal Welfare
 - Strategic Planning - New Tower Hamlets Local Plan
 - Development Management - Planning Performance Agreement (PPA)
 - Academies - charges for conversions
4. To note the detailed list of proposed changes within

Health, Adults & Community as set out in Section 3.2 and **Appendix 1** to the report.

Children & Culture as set out in Section 3.3 and **Appendix 2** to the report.

Place as set out in Section 3.4 and **Appendix 3** to the report.

Governance as set out in Section 3.5 and **Appendix 4** to the report.

Resources as set out in Section 3.6 and **Appendix 5** to the report.

5. To note the revised Statutory fees and charges as set out in Appendix 6 to the report with effect from 1st April 2020.

6.4 Calculation of Council Tax Base 2020-21

The **Mayor** introduced the report. He noted the phenomenal growth rate in the Borough over recent years and how it was likely to continue in the near future as well. He **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To approve, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012, that the amount calculated by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets as its Council Tax Base for the year 2020-21 shall be 102,266.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Nil items.

9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business

Nil items.

10.2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil items.

11. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 6.38 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS