

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

**HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2019**

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

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Mufeedah Bustin
- Councillor James King
- Councillor Ehtasham Haque
- Councillor Kyrsten Perry
- Councillor Eve McQuillian
- Councillor Dan Tomlinson

Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillor John Pierce

**2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

The following Councillors declared a Non - Disclosable Pecuniary interest that the Council has decided should be registered

- Councillor Asma Begum - agenda item 8.1, Member Question regarding the London City Airport. This was on the basis that Councillor Begum was an Authority appointed Member of the London City Airport Consultative Committee.
- Councillor Asma Islam - agenda item 8.1, Member Question regarding the London City Airport. This was on the basis that Councillor Islam was a Trustee of the London City Airport Fund
- Councillor Bex White agenda item 8.1, Member Question regarding the London City Airport. This was on the basis that she lived under the flight path of the airport.

Following a request from a large number of Members who had interests in agenda item 11.1 (Motion regarding restoring Fairness to the Leaseholder System) the Monitoring Officer agreed to grant a dispensation to Councillors with a leaseholder Interest in respect of the Item, under Section C, Paragraph 32 of the Code of Conduct for Members.

As a result of this, Councillors with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item did not need to declare this and would be able to stay in the meeting room, participate in the discussion and vote on the item

**3. MINUTES**

**DECISION:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 18 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

Please see the minutes.

**5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**

**5.1 Petition regarding Save Our Youth Centre**

Geneva Blissett addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

**DECISION**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Children and Culture, for a written response within 28 days.

**(Action by:** Debbie Jones, Corporate Director, Children and Culture).

**5.2 Petition regarding Trees for Mile End**

Nicholas Caulkett addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

**DECISION**

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

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place).

### **5.3 Petition regarding Anti - Social Behaviour issues in Jolly's Green Areas**

Redwan Shuhel and Tony Harrison addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

#### **DECISION**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community for a written response within 28 days.

(**Action by:** Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community).

### **5.4 Petition regarding residential permits for all Electric Car Drivers**

Love Oyeniran addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

#### **DECISION**

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

(**Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place).

### **5.5 Petition regarding Bartlett Park and planning consultations.**

#### **DECISION**

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

(**Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place).

## **6. MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor presented his report to the Council. Following which:

- Councillor Andrew Wood, Leader of the Conservative Group, responded briefly to the Mayor's report.
- The Mayor responded briefly

## 7. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

### 7. Opposition Motion for Debate from the Conservative Group - regarding the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework

Councillor Andrew Wood **moved** and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Rachel Blake **moved** and Councillor Danny Hassell **seconded** the following amendment to the motion to be debated as tabled:

*Added text underlined*  
*Deleted text scored out.*

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

The publication by the Mayor of London on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019 of the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF).

That the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said in his introduction *“without a plan in place, this growth is causing unacceptable impacts on existing local communities from construction in the short term to provision of the necessary supporting facilities for these developments in the long term.”*

The introduction also said, *“Unique amongst London’s Opportunity Areas, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar is currently experiencing intense development pressure, mainly in the form of new, very high density housing.”*

That the OAPF contains three growth scenarios for new homes in the area (the wards of Island Gardens, Canary Wharf, Blackwall & Cubitt Town and Poplar):

- Baseline 31,000 extra homes
  - High growth 38,000 extra homes
  - Maximum growth 49,000 extra homes
- + office space for an additional 110,000 jobs in each scenario

That these are the largest combined OAPF targets in London.

That the new London Plan has a target of 29,000 new homes in the same area + 110,000 new jobs.

That the new Tower Hamlets Council Local Plan has a minimum target of 30,601 new homes between 2016 and 2031 in the same Area (56% of all new housing in Tower Hamlets)

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

- The council’s youth service operates a dedicated youth hub at Andrews Wharf, which has over the last summer been supplemented by

additional capacity from the Rapid Response Team. In addition there are services and activities provided by the voluntary sector at Alpha Grove Community Centre. Isle of Dogs is also home to Streets of Growth who will be receiving money from the LCF. More specifically the LCF also includes funding for the Canaan Project which provides activities for young women aged 11-19 on the Isle of Dogs. Working with George Green's school and Café Forever we offer activities including cooking, craft, sports, and inspirational workshops at our weekly lunch and after school clubs as well as opportunities to join us for regular trips.

- That the Alpha Square primary school is no longer required by this Council although construction started in October
- The government commitment to fund 60 capital costs for new youth centres nationally but sadly not the ongoing staffing costs for hardworking youth workers who provide life-changing support and services
- ~~That the Isle of Dogs & South Poplar area has only two small youth centres, at St Andrews Wharf in Island Gardens and Poplar Spotlight. There are none planned in Canary Wharf and Blackwall & Cubitt Town wards despite both wards being the main focus of new residential growth~~
- The large amounts of allocated, unspent S106 & Community Infrastructure levy which is programmed for new investment
- The more than £167 millions of grant money paid by government (New Homes Bonus) to help support high growth which has been reduced by central government.

**The Council is concerned that:**

The GLA commissioned Development Infrastructure Finding Study (DIFS) which accompanies the OAPF ~~says that~~ forecast the following amounts (£'000) ~~should have been spent from~~ anticipated from April 2017 onwards on Infrastructure 'Gross' Costs in the Low/Baseline Growth option (excluding DLR Upgrade & Rotherhithe bridge costs)

Category £'000	2017 /18	2018/1 9	2019/20	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	First five years
Utilities	£2,728	£11,088	£8,838	£11,838	£11,838	<b>£46,330</b>
Transport & Local Connections	£139	£9,806	£18,756	£23,830	£17,164	<b>£69,695</b>
Education	£28,946	£28,946	£28,946	£28,946	£28,946	<b>£144,730</b>
Fire, Ambulance, Police, CCTV	£2,930	£0	£0	£0	£0	<b>£2,930</b>
Health	£1,526	£1,526	£1,526	£1,526	£1,526	<b>£7,630</b>
Leisure	£4,764	£4,764	£4,764	£4,764	£4,764	<b>£23,820</b>
Community facilities	£738	£738	£5,411	£5,411	£5,411	<b>£17,709</b>
<b>Total Low</b>	<b>£41,771</b>	<b>£56,868</b>	<b>£68,241</b>	<b>£76,315</b>	<b>£69,649</b>	<b>£312,844</b>

During this period LBTH has undertaken it's own detailed forecasting for school places resulting in 98% of families getting their first choice of primary school.

Local Government does not have the necessary powers to direct primary care spending, despite the powers to plan for additional health infrastructure.

That with the exception of some spending on the new South Dock bridge that none of it has been spent or is likely to be spent soon despite development continuing and new planning applications being submitted.

That the total estimated 'all-in' infrastructure costs between 2017 and 2042 are in each growth scenario:

Baseline £1,604 million

High growth £1,756 million

Maximum growth £1,840 million

#### **The Council resolves:**

- To report on the newly established ~~set up an~~ internal LBTH team to leading on the programme of infrastructure development required to support this growth ~~paid for by New Homes Bonus~~
- To report on ~~ask~~ the GLA & TfL to committed staff to supporting this growth in the same way that they have done at Old Oak Common and the Royal Docks which have much lower housing and jobs targets
- To support a cross sector campaign to ~~the work~~ Canary Wharf Group ~~are doing in trying to~~ increase transport capacity to the area given that

even the Elizabeth line is not sufficient to support this level of planned growth

- To responsibly programme, allocate and spend Community Infrastructure Levy and income from Section 106 agreements to the areas with the more significant infrastructure pressures including for example the South Dock Bridge and planned new primary schools ~~commit to only spending Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 money earn't in the OAPF area in the area as required by the DIFS, given the forecast funding deficits and lack of clarity over whether the rest of the money will come from~~
- To review youth services in the borough, including the location of youth centres, reaching out to all young people to ensure the best possible outcomes in the context of declining resources in Local Government. ~~build a new youth centre in one of the sites with planning permission for a school and to partner with the Youth Zone charity in order to reduce the operating cost impact on the general fund~~

The amendment was put to the vote and **agreed**

Following debate, the motion as amended was put to the vote and was **agreed.**

#### **DECISION:**

The publication by the Mayor of London on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019 of the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF).

That the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said in his introduction *“without a plan in place, this growth is causing unacceptable impacts on existing local communities from construction in the short term to provision of the necessary supporting facilities for these developments in the long term.”*

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That the new Tower Hamlets Council Local Plan has a minimum target of 30,601 new homes between 2016 and 2031 in the same Area (56% of all new housing in Tower Hamlets)

**This Council further notes:**

- The council's youth service operates a dedicated youth hub at Andrews Wharf, which has over the last summer been supplemented by additional capacity from the Rapid Response Team. In addition there are services and activities provided by the voluntary sector at Alpha Grove Community Centre. Isle of Dogs is also home to Streets of Growth who will be receiving money from the LCF. More specifically the LCF also includes funding for the Canaan Project which provides activities for young women aged 11-19 on the Isle of Dogs. Working with George Green's school and Café Forever we offer activities including cooking, craft, sports, and inspirational workshops at our weekly lunch and after school clubs as well as opportunities to join us for regular trips.
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- The more than £167 millions of grant money paid by government (New Homes Bonus) to help support high growth which has been reduced by central government.

**The Council is concerned that:**

The GLA commissioned Development Infrastructure Finding Study (DIFS) which accompanies the OAPF forecast the following amounts (£'000) anticipated from April 2017 onwards on Infrastructure 'Gross' Costs in the Low/Baseline Growth option (excluding DLR Upgrade & Rotherhithe bridge costs)



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During this period LBTH has undertaken it's own detailed forecasting for school places resulting in 98% of families getting their first choice of primary school.

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That the total estimated 'all-in' infrastructure costs between 2017 and 2042 are in each growth scenario:

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 Maximum growth £1,840 million

**The Council resolves:**

- To report on the newly established internal LBTH team leading on the programme of infrastructure development required to support this growth
- To report on the GLA & TfL committed staff supporting this growth in the same way that they have done at Old Oak Common and the Royal Docks which have much lower housing and jobs targets
- To support a cross sector campaign to increase transport capacity to the area given that even the Elizabeth line is not sufficient to support this level of planned growth

- To responsibly programme, allocate and spend Community Infrastructure Levy and income from Section 106 agreements to the areas with the more significant infrastructure pressures including for example the South Dock Bridge and planned new primary schools
- To review youth services in the borough, including the location of youth centres, reaching out to all young people to ensure the best possible outcomes in the context of declining resources in Local Government.

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place).

## **8. 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.

- 8.2 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood regarding the need for a new youth centre in the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar area. (No supplementary question was asked)
- 8.3 Question from Councillor Kahar Chowdhury requesting an update on primary school results this year.
- 8.4 Questions from Councillor Peter Golds regarding the application of the Member Code of Conduct to maintain high standards.
- 8.5 Question from Councillor Sufia Alam about the government's recent school funding announcements. (No supplementary question was asked)
- 8.6 Questions from Councillor Faroque Ahmed regarding improvements to the environment around the new Town Hall in Whitechapel.
- 8.7 Question from Councillor Leema Qureshi regarding current activities to ensure children have the best start in life. (No supplementary question was asked)
- 8.8 Question from Councillor Marc Francis regarding the proposed end of the meals on wheels service.
- 8.9 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah requesting a review of the Wapping Bus Gate restrictions. (No supplementary question was asked)
- 8.11 Question Councillor Asma Islam about the Local Community Fund. (No supplementary question was asked)
- 8.12 Question from Councillor Val Whitehead about the Council's response to the Child Poverty Action Group's proposals on universal credit.

8.13 Question from Councillor Tarik Khan about the Liveable Streets programme and the proposals for Bethnal Green.

8.14 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan seeking assurances regarding the treatment of applications for medical priority based on ASD. (No supplementary question was asked)

Questions 8.1, and 8.10 were not put due to the absence of the questioner. A written response would be provided to the questions. (Note the written responses will follow)

**(Action by:**–Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services to arrange written responses)

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

### **9.1 Report from Cabinet: Gambling Policy 2019- 2022**

The Council considered a report of the Mayor in Cabinet on the proposed revised Gambling Policy for 2019-22.

#### **DECISION:**

1. That the revised Gambling Policy for 2019-22 be adopted.

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place).

## **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **10.1 Waiver of 6 Month Councillor Attendance Rule (Sec. 85 of the Local Government Act 1972)**

The Council considered a report on the proposal to waive the 6-month attendance rule for Councillor Mufeedah Bustin's maternity leave.

#### **DECISION:**

1. That Councillor Mufeedah Bustin's period of office be extended beyond the six month period of non-attendance provided for within Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds of being on maternity leave.
2. That Council approve the requested extension of time to expire on 31 May 2020.
3. That Councillor Eve McQuillan be appointed as the Mayoral Advisor for Tackling Poverty and Inequalities for the duration of Councillor Mufeedah Bustin's maternity leave.

**(Action by:** Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director (Governance) & Monitoring Officer)

**11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor Peter Golds **moved** and Councillor Andrew Wood **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved** and Councillor Rachel Blake **seconded** the following amendment to the motion to be debated as tabled:

Added text underlined  
Deleted text scored out.

**This Council notes:**

There is a need for Tower Hamlets Council to promote fairness and transparency for the growing number of leaseholders in our borough and to address the unfair practices that exist in the leaseholder market.

For over two decades issues regarding the unfairness of leasehold tenure in England and Wales have been raised by ministers from all governments.

Currently the Law Commission are considering a range of options for reforming the law on enfranchisement to make it easier, quicker, and cheaper for leaseholders to buy their freehold or extend their lease, for future implementation.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched an investigation into the leasehold system in June 2019 following concerns from MPs and consumer groups, looking at potential mis-selling and potential unfair terms.

The council notes the number of leasehold properties within the borough and fully supports a fairer, more transparent system for leaseholders nationally.

**This council further notes:**

Problems with some leases are becoming increasingly onerous to those purchasing a leasehold flat or house. While a leasehold may be presented as a cheaper option than buying the freehold, it is not always clear to the leaseholder what additional medium or long-term costs they may face.

Some of the problems experienced by leaseholders are:

- Doubling ground rents: paying an increasing and continuing ground rent, which makes some leaseholders unable to sell their home due to difficulties securing a mortgage;
- Excessive and unjustified service or administration fees: paying potential fees for permissions to make alterations to a property or covenants in a lease; and

- Difficulty buying the freehold: the financial impact of extending the lease or buying the freehold from the developer after moving in;
- Lack of transparency: information is not always clear to leaseholders when purchasing to leaseholds.

These costs can total thousands of pounds more than envisaged at the point of sale.

In addition, where developers sell on the freehold interest to a third party after a leaseholder has moved into a new build house, consumers can find that they are faced with significant legal and surveyor costs where they want to purchase the freehold. Such transfers can take place without the leaseholder being informed.

The council supports a small number of leaseholders who contact officers directly however in the vast majority of cases leaseholders are advised to raise issues with their freeholder or managing agent, and to contact the Leasehold Advisory Service who provide free advice on service charges, extending a lease, and buying the freehold. Where there is a dispute, the leaseholder is advised to contact the Housing Ombudsman.

Tower Hamlets Homes launched its 'New Deal for Leaseholders' in June 2017 to give better payment terms and consultation for major works, access to partner services, clearer details about rights and responsibilities and better digital services.

#### **This Council resolves that:**

- ~~Support for commonhold ownership for flats, in preference to leasehold title ownership should be encouraged.~~
- The Cabinet Member should update members on the CMA review into the leaseholder system when it has been completed.
- That council officers should hold a discussion with developers should be encouraged to deliver about commonhold ownership, not leasehold and that the council explores ways of encouraging that via the existing planning system. at the next bi-annual Developers Forum following the conclusion of the CMA review.
- That the council ~~supports~~ should signpost advice for leaseholders looking to buy their freehold often against freeholders who are unwilling to negotiate fairly.
- The council explores ways in how we can ~~support~~ continue to signpost leaseholders ~~with~~ to more information from expert agencies about service charges, their calculation, how to complain and ~~to~~ what support is available to them ~~against the occasional~~ in respect of unscrupulous landlords.

Councillor Peter Golds and Councillor Andrew Wood indicated that they accepted the amendment to the motion.

The motion as amended was unanimously **agreed**.

**DECISION:**

**This Council notes:**

There is a need for Tower Hamlets Council to promote fairness and transparency for the growing number of leaseholders in our borough and to address the unfair practices that exist in the leaseholder market.

For over two decades issues regarding the unfairness of leasehold tenure in England and Wales have been raised by ministers from all governments.

Currently the Law Commission are considering a range of options for reforming the law on enfranchisement to make it easier, quicker, and cheaper for leaseholders to buy their freehold or extend their lease, for future implementation.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched an investigation into the leasehold system in June 2019 following concerns from MPs and consumer groups, looking at potential mis-selling and potential unfair terms.

The council notes the number of leasehold properties within the borough and fully supports a fairer, more transparent system for leaseholders nationally.

**This council further notes:**

Problems with some leases are becoming increasingly onerous to those purchasing a leasehold flat or house. While a leasehold may be presented as a cheaper option than buying the freehold, it is not always clear to the leaseholder what additional medium or long-term costs they may face.

Some of the problems experienced by leaseholders are:

- Doubling ground rents: paying an increasing and continuing ground rent, which makes some leaseholders unable to sell their home due to difficulties securing a mortgage;
- Excessive and unjustified service or administration fees: paying potential fees for permissions to make alterations to a property or covenants in a lease; and
- Difficulty buying the freehold: the financial impact of extending the lease or buying the freehold from the developer after moving in;

- Lack of transparency: information is not always clear to leaseholders when purchasing to leaseholds.

These costs can total thousands of pounds more than envisaged at the point of sale.

In addition, where developers sell on the freehold interest to a third party after a leaseholder has moved into a new build house, consumers can find that they are faced with significant legal and surveyor costs where they want to purchase the freehold. Such transfers can take place without the leaseholder being informed.

The council supports a small number of leaseholders who contact officers directly however in the vast majority of cases leaseholders are advised to raise issues with their freeholder or managing agent, and to contact the Leasehold Advisory Service who provide free advice on service charges, extending a lease, and buying the freehold. Where there is a dispute, the leaseholder is advised to contact the Housing Ombudsman.

Tower Hamlets Homes launched its 'New Deal for Leaseholders' in June 2017 to give better payment terms and consultation for major works, access to partner services, clearer details about rights and responsibilities and better digital services.

**This Council resolves that:**

- The Cabinet Member should update members on the CMA review into the leaseholder system when it has been completed.
- That council officers should hold a discussion with developers about commonhold ownership at the next bi-annual Developers Forum following the conclusion of the CMA review.
- That the council should signpost advice for leaseholders looking to buy their freehold often against freeholders who are unwilling to negotiate fairly.
- The council explores ways in how we can continue to signpost leaseholders to more information from expert agencies about service charges, their calculation, how to complain and what support is available to them in respect of unscrupulous landlords.

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place)

## 11.2 Motion regarding Autism in Housing

Councillor Rabina Khan **moved** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved** and Councillor Amina Ali **seconded** the following amendment to the motion to be debated as tabled

*Added text underlined*

*Deleted text scored out.*

### **This Council Notes:**

1. That Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a wide-ranging and complex condition, which has far-reaching effects on an individual's life and that of their families and others involved in their lives. Autism is regarded as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). However, high-functioning autism (Asperger's) is often seen as an invisible disability.
2. Sufferers have diverse physical and psychological requirements, so the home environment and the available facilities are therefore crucial to the wellbeing of families with a member on the ASD spectrum. Some ASD sufferers rely heavily on routine and structure and can suffer from extreme anxiety when they face any major upheaval or changes.
3. Many families with one or more members on the ASD spectrum are living in wholly inadequate properties, which do not meet their needs, yet they are not being given medical priority to enable them to be rehoused.
4. Under the DDA, reasonable steps must be taken by councils, housing associations and landlords to address the barriers that may be experienced by disabled tenants.
5. Adults with ASD may feel isolated, but do not have the social skills to enable them to connect with other people. They may not know how to behave appropriately with neighbours or others in the community and some have obsessive or ritualistic behaviours, which can seem challenging to others.
6. The new local Housing Strategy has specifically recognised the needs of people with learning difficulty and autism and contains a commitment to work to support the development of an Accommodation Plan for People with Learning Disabilities and those on the ASD spectrum.
7. However, it does not go far enough in properly assessing the forms submitted by those who have applied for medical priority, especially when there is overwhelming evidence from doctors, health departments and other professionals to support the applications.



**This Council Believes:**

1. That the Council has a duty to support and assist people with ASD to enable them to access appropriate living conditions.
2. It recognises that every case is different and there can be a variety of complex needs specific to each case.
3. Some children with ASD have very little awareness of their own safety and that of others, so full assessments should be carried out to ensure that adaptations are made where necessary to protect the families concerned.
4. Through our Choice Based Lettings scheme each case will be assessed so applicants are awarded priority based on this and can then bid for properties they deem are suitable for their individual needs. ~~Priority must be given to families where the ASD sufferer does not have their own bedroom, as they need their own space and it is important that they do not disturb their siblings/other family members and vice versa. There should also be adequate toilet/bathroom facilities.~~
5. Many people with ASD need a calming environment, as some have a higher sensitivity to noise, light, heat or smell. ~~Placing a family with an ASD member in a property next to a busy train line, for example, would not be suitable.~~

**This Council Resolves:**

1. To fulfil its vision in its [Autism Strategy for Adults 2017-22](#) of ensuring that: "All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents."
2. To ensure that applications for medical priority on the basis of ASD should be assessed by an appropriate, trained assessor and where appropriate receive a home visit. ~~by a specialist medical assessor with a specific understanding of ASD.~~
3. ~~To ensure that, where necessary, such applications for medical priority should be entitled to automatic OT visit.~~

Councillor Rabina Khan indicated that she accepted the amendment to the motion.

The motion as amended was unanimously **agreed**.

**DECISION:**

**This Council Notes:**

1. That Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a wide-ranging and complex condition, which has far-reaching effects on an individual's life and that of their families and others involved in their lives. Autism is regarded as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). However, high-functioning autism (Asperger's) is often seen as an invisible disability.
2. Sufferers have diverse physical and psychological requirements, so the home environment and the available facilities are therefore crucial to the wellbeing of families with a member on the ASD spectrum. Some ASD sufferers rely heavily on routine and structure and can suffer from extreme anxiety when they face any major upheaval or changes.
3. Many families with one or more members on the ASD spectrum are living in wholly inadequate properties, which do not meet their needs, yet they are not being given medical priority to enable them to be rehoused.
4. Under the DDA, reasonable steps must be taken by councils, housing associations and landlords to address the barriers that may be experienced by disabled tenants.
5. Adults with ASD may feel isolated, but do not have the social skills to enable them to connect with other people. They may not know how to behave appropriately with neighbours or others in the community and some have obsessive or ritualistic behaviours, which can seem challenging to others.
6. The new local Housing Strategy has specifically recognised the needs of people with learning difficulty and autism and contains a commitment to work to support the development of an Accommodation Plan for People with Learning Disabilities and those on the ASD spectrum.
7. However, it does not go far enough in properly assessing the forms submitted by those who have applied for medical priority, especially when there is overwhelming evidence from doctors, health departments and other professionals to support the applications.

**This Council Believes:**

1. That the Council has a duty to support and assist people with ASD to enable them to access appropriate living conditions.
2. It recognises that every case is different and there can be a variety of complex needs specific to each case.

3. Some children with ASD have very little awareness of their own safety and that of others, so full assessments should be carried out to ensure that adaptations are made where necessary to protect the families concerned.
4. Through our Choice Based Lettings scheme each case will be assessed so applicants are awarded priority based on this and can then bid for properties they deem are suitable for their individual needs.
5. Many people with ASD need a calming environment, as some have a higher sensitivity to noise, light, heat or smell.

**This Council Resolves:**

1. To fulfil its vision in its [Autism Strategy for Adults 2017-22](#) of ensuring that: “All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents.”
2. To ensure that applications for medical priority on the basis of ASD should be assessed by an appropriate, trained assessor and where appropriate receive a home visit.

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place/ Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community).

The meeting ended at 9.25 p.m.