

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET**

**HELD AT 5.32 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-tv/core/portal/home)**

**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 Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Children and Schools )
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	(Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Social Inclusion
Councillor Asma Islam	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Environment
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Planning
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Public Realm

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor James King	

**Officers Present:**

Adam Boey	(Senior Strategy & Policy Manager - Corporate)
Stephen Bramah	(Deputy Head of the Mayor's office)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Thorsten Dreyer	(Head of Intelligence and Performance)
Emily Fieran-Reed	(Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning, Strategy, Policy and Equality)
Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Rafiqul Hoque	Head of Housing Options
Asmat Hussain	(Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring)

Neville Murton	Officer) (Corporate Director, Resources)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Karen Swift	(Divisional Director, Housing)
James Thomas	Corporate Director, Children and Culture
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, however there were 'other interests' declarations on Agenda Item 6.3 (Common Housing Register Allocations Scheme) by Councillor Sirajul Islam as a tenant of Tower Hamlets Homes and Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman as a leaseholder of Tower Hamlets Homes. Both Members took part in the discussion on that item.

## 3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

### RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 29 July 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

## 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The **Mayor** provided a couple of announcements:

- On the continuing COVID-19 challenge he reported on work the Council was undertaking with partners and reminded everyone how important it was to follow the hygiene and distancing rules to restrict the spread of the virus.
- The Council was working to ensure that local communities were kept informed and supported. The Council was launching a COVID Champion scheme to help with this engagement.
- A reminder to ensure everyone takes up the flu vaccinations on offer.
- Agreement had been reached with the Department for Education and the Mulberry Schools Trust to fund and build a new, mixed Secondary School opening in September 2023 on the London Docks Site. This will also enable a full rebuild of the George Green School on its current site and secure a site for Canary Wharf College on the Westferry Site.

## **5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions**

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were received in relation to Agenda Items:

- 6.2 Annual Council performance and delivery report
- 6.3 Common Housing Register Allocations Scheme
- 6.4 Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2022-23
- 6.5 Seahorse Homes Limited
- 6.7 Contracts Forward Plan 2020/21 Q2

These were considered during discussion on the relevant items.

In addition, Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), provided the meeting with an update on OSC's recent work. He reported that their meeting on Monday had considered four substantive items on:

- Their review of the Council's response to COVID-19 which looked at the work of the Council, partners and community in the early stages of the pandemic. He praised the work of those involved but highlighted there were always opportunities to learn from experiences and the Committee's report would look to do that.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report looked at the work of the committee over the previous year.
- As Chair he had conducted a survey of Members to better understand their views on how scrutiny could continue to improve and develop.
- There had been a Spotlight on Finance which was looking particularly at areas of overspend such as in Children and Adult Services.

The **Mayor** thanked Councillor James King for his update.

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

Nil items.

## **6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **6.1 Our Tower Hamlets: A Plan for a More Cohesive Community 2020 - 2025**

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities. She welcomed the report as a comprehensive document setting out the administrations clear priorities in this area. Recent events such as the Black Lives Matter protests had shown why this was so important. The plan set out how inequalities across the different protected characteristics would be tackled.

She explained that the three priority areas were in relation to connecting people, involving and empowering the community and on bridging equality

gaps. She also noted recent progress which would be built on such as the increase in volunteering during the pandemic. Finally she reported that the work of partner organisations was vital to the success of the plan.

The **Mayor** commended the report as an important foundation to the work of the Council. He welcomed the commitment to ensuring documentation was presented to the public in 'plain English' and he **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To agree the London Borough of Tower Hamlet's Community Cohesion Plan, including the commitments under each of the priority areas (noting that the versions of the Plan that will be launched to the public will be in plain English).

## **6.2 Annual council performance and delivery report 2019/20**

The **Mayor** introduced the report setting out the Council's performance against its key strategic targets. He explained that the Council looked to meet challenging targets to stretch its performance. He noted many areas of success such as on affordable housing, young people in education, employment or training, CO2 emissions, drug treatment programmes and more. He also noted areas that required most work such as around discharges from hospitals. A lot of the targets also related to the work in conjunction with partners.

He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses especially in relation to areas such as staff sickness and Workpath. He noted the work the Council was taking on to support staff during the COVID pandemic and progress on the other matters raised. He **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To note the Annual council performance & delivery report 2019/20
2. To note the performance of the strategic measures at the end of the year, including those measures where the minimum expectation has been missed; and
3. To note progress in delivering the Strategic Plan.

## **6.3 Common Housing Register Allocations Scheme (Post-Consultation)**

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report. He highlighted the proposals which had received the most comments during consultation including amendments which had therefore been made to the proposals to remove different groups to Band 3. He also noted positive changes that were being proposed around relief housing and more.

He proposed an additional recommendation around the future review of the scheme and the offer of a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its impact.

The report was discussed and various issues were debated including around intermediate housing, overcrowding, anti-social behaviour and abuse, local advertising of properties and the potential for unexpected implications from the changes. The **Mayor** thanked everyone for their contributions and officers for preparing the report. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses, agreed to add the additional recommendation and **agreed** the updated recommendations.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To note the outcome of the consultation on the Council's proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme and the Equality Analyses at Appendices 2 and 4 of the report.
2. To approve the proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme as set out in paragraph 3.3 to 3.7 of the report.
3. To approve the proposal to remove existing social housing tenants under the age of 50 from Band 3 of the Common Housing Register.
4. To authorise the Corporate Director Place to develop an Intermediate Housing Register.
5. To authorise the Corporate Director Place to determine the eligibility criteria for the first three months of marketing any new Intermediate Housing projects, (fully or partially funded by the GLA), following consultation with the Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration.
6. To agree that the maximum household income threshold for eligibility to join the Common Housing Register be increased to £90,000 as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report and authorise the Corporate Director Place to increase this figure as and when the GLA amends its maximum household income threshold for eligibility to access shared ownership products.
7. To approve the miscellaneous amendments and revisions to the policy as detailed in paragraph 3.11 of the report.
8. To ratify and/or authorise all past, present and future exercises of its functions under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as permitted by Article 2 of the Local Authorities (Contracting Out of Allocation of Housing and Homelessness Functions) Order 1996) by, or by employees of, the RP partners from time to time to the Common Housing Register, including but not limited to the following: Arhag Housing Association, Clarion Housing, Eastend Homes, Gateway

Housing Association, London & Quadrant, Metropolitan Thames Valley, Network Homes, Newlon Housing Trust, North London Muslim Housing Association, Notting Hill Genesis, One Housing, Peabody, Poplar HARCA, Providence Row HA, Southern Housing Group, Spitalfields Housing Association, Swan Housing Association, Tower Hamlets Community Housing or their successors in title or any other RPs or bodies that the Council may choose to partner with from time to time.

9. To authorise officers retrospectively to contract out the exercise of the Council's functions referred to in point 8 above.
10. To review the policy annually and offer the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a report on the implementation of the changes made one year after their implementation (expected to be one year after 1 April 2021),

#### **6.4 Capital programme 2020-21 to 2022-23**

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing (with special responsibility for Capital Delivery), introduced the report. She highlighted that this was driven by the Council's collective commitment to invest in infrastructure that had a real impact in the lives of residents such as schools, open spaces, bridges, specialist housing and more across the whole borough.

This report updated from the previous report to match up with expected funding available. Key items include the South Dock bridge, highways improvements, Thames Path, East India Dock Basin and school investments. Details of the projects were set out in the appendices. She commended this as an exciting set of projects for the borough.

Finally, she requested that recommendation number 6 be varied to clarify arrangements for education linked projects.

During discussion the **Mayor** noted the importance of estate regeneration to residents and the challenges in relation to uncertain funding streams. He welcomed the report and noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses. Finally he amended and **agreed** the recommendations.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. To approve the 3-year General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2020-23 as set out in Appendix 1a and Appendix 1f to the report.
2. To approve the budget allocation for schemes in the programme, including the Local Infrastructure Fund Programme 2, subject to sign off through the capital governance process and agreement to proceed given by the Corporate Director of Place and Corporate Director of Resources and that schemes funded by future capital receipts, s106

and/or CIL will not go ahead until such funds have been securely received

3. To approve the new additions to the Annual Rolling Programme, subject to Recommendation 2, as set out in Appendix 1c to the report.
4. To approve the Invest to Save programme, subject to business cases being approved by the Corporate Director of Place and Corporate Director of Resources and Recommendation 2, as set in Appendix 1d to the report.
5. To approve the use of 5% of CIL or £1.500m whichever is the lower for use on feasibility studies and associated surveys for infrastructure projects as set out in paragraph 7.5.7 of the report.
6. To approve the funding principle that Education schemes should not be funded by council borrowing or by non-Education capital receipts, unless Members have taken into consideration the impact on other priority schemes and the extent to which DfE funding will meet basic needs requirements alongside any relevant S106 or CIL receipts.
7. To approve delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Place and Corporate Director of Resources for all activities required to deliver e.g. go out to tender, appoint consultants and contractors, acquire land interests, appropriate land from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the delivery of new council homes, subject to approved budget
8. To approve the following specific recommendations:
  - i. The transfer of funding for Angela Court from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account as set out in paragraph 11.3.13 of the report;
  - ii. The expansion of Beatrice Tate School to provide an additional 45 spaces for pupils with special needs; Approve the expansion of alternative provision at Harpley School to provide additional spaces for KS4 and post-16 pupils as set out in paragraphs 10.5.4 and 10.5.7 of the report respectively;
  - iii. Realign the previously approved budgets streams in relation to buyback programme, as set out in paragraph 11.3.26 of the report;
  - iv. Disposal of assets, as set out in paragraph 7.6.2 of the report;
9. To note the consideration of the financing options and proposals for the uncommitted and new schemes, as set out in Appendix 1e to the report, will be brought forward in January 2021

10. To note the development of the medium term and long-term Prioritisation and Financing Delivery Plan for Infrastructure (PFDP) identifying priorities beyond 2023 to 2030
11. To note Capital Governance changes contained in section 14 designed to support further improved monitoring and management of the capital programme.

## **6.5 Seahorse Homes Limited - Shareholder Representative Report and Loan Facility**

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report. He explained that Seahorse Homes was a company wholly owned by the Council. Its role was to invest in property to generate a return. The company has identified some acquisition opportunities and this requires an increase in the credit facilities provided.

The Chief Executive, as shareholder representative addressed the meeting to set out the reasons for the recommendations.

The **Mayor** welcomed the progress being made. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To agree to authorise the Divisional Director, Finance, Procurement and Audit to increase the credit facility of Seahorse Homes Limited up to £150,000 and agree the corresponding repayment terms.

## **6.6 Nomination to Outside Bodies**

The **Mayor** introduced the report setting out proposed nominations to outside bodies. He welcomed the report and **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To agree the nominations to outside bodies as shown in Paragraph 3.3 of the report.

## **6.7 Contracts Forward Plan 2020/21 – Quarter Two**

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She highlighted that Appendix 1 contained details of contracts to proceed to tender whilst Appendix 2 was a longer term schedule of expected procurement activity.

The **Mayor** noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and confirmed he was content for the contracts set out in Appendix 1 to proceed to tender. He **agreed** the recommendations on that basis.



**RESOLVED**

1. To note the contract summary at Appendix 1 to the report and agree that all listed contracts may proceed to contract award after tender.
2. To authorise the Divisional Director, Legal Services to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts referred to at recommendation 1 above
3. To note the procurement forward plan 2020-2022 schedule detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

**7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

**8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Nil items.

**9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

1. That the exempt/confidential minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 29 July 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

**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. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Nil items.

**12. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 7.28 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS