

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL**

**HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2021**

**MAIN HALL, BRADY ARTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE, 192-196 HANBURY STREET, LONDON, E1 5HU**

**Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs*	Councillor Rabina Khan*
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Councillor Tarik Khan*
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor James King
Councillor Sabina Akhtar*	Councillor Eve McQuillan
Councillor Sufia Alam	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Shah Ameen	Councillor Puru Miah
Councillor Asma Begum*	Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE*
Councillor Rachel Blake*	Councillor Mohammed Pappu
Councillor Kevin Brady	Councillor Kyrsten Perry
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Councillor Leema Qureshi*
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Shad Chowdhury*	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Dipa Das	Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan
Councillor David Edgar*	Councillor Dan Tomlinson
Councillor Peter Golds*	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Ehtasham Haque*	Councillor Abdal Ullah*
Councillor Danny Hassell	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman*
Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain*	Councillor Val Whitehead
Councillor Asma Islam*	Councillor Bex White
Councillor Sirajul Islam*	Councillor Andrew Wood*
Councillor Denise Jones	

\*Councillors present in person and able to vote.  
(Remaining Councillors attended from remote locations).

**THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL MOHAMMED AHBAB HOSSAIN, IN THE CHAIR**

**1. ELECTION OF SPEAKER**

The Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer called for nominations to serve as Speaker of the Council for the coming year.

It was **moved** by Mayor John Biggs, and **seconded** by Councillor Sabina Akhtar, and unanimously:

**RESOLVED**

1. That Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain, be elected to serve as Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council Meeting in May 2022.

Mayor John Biggs spoke in support of his nomination. He stated that Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain had served the community proudly and had worked tirelessly in support of many good causes over the years and for his ward. He felt therefore it was fitting that he should serve as the Speaker of the Council.

The Mayor also recognised that since the Speaker's election in September 2020, this had been a difficult time for the community, with the focus of the Council and the Speaker on helping residents. He hoped however, that with the lifting of the restrictions, the Speaker could fully fulfil his civic duties and continue with his community work. He felt that the Speaker would continue to serve the community proudly and his office would be at the centre of the recovery.

Councillor Sabina Akhtar stated that it was an honour for her to second the nomination. She recognised that, despite the difficult circumstances, the Speaker had served the community with dignity and honour. She also welcomed that he had been an advocate of important causes. She looked forward to the Speaker continuing with this work over the next year.

Councillors Peter Golds, Asma Islam, David Edgar and Rabina Khan also echoed the above sentiments. Whilst recognising his good work over the year, they also look forward to the Speaker's participation in community life again.

In particular, Councillor Asma Islam thanked the Speaker for providing a platform for important community events and bringing the community together, such as the interfaith events.

Councillor David Edgar stated that he pleased to see the Speaker present in person at a Council meeting. He hoped that he could continue his personal attendance at Council meetings and at community events.

Councillor Rabina Khan also wished to highlight the Speaker's work to reach out to opposition Councillors and to the community. She particularly welcomed his role in supporting the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence celebration events.

Councillor Peter Golds also thanked Councillor Victoria Obaze for all the work she had undertaken as the previous Speaker of the Council.

The Speaker of the Council then addressed the meeting on his re – election as Speaker. He firstly recognised that this had been a difficult time for all of the community. Many had lost loved ones and have had to adapt to the restrictions.

In light of this, he highlighted his decision to focus his activities completely on the community, primarily by attending and initiating virtual community events.

He thanked everyone for their support over this year, especially his consorts: his wife Rohima Begum, and good friends Mohammed Sunahar Ali and Abdul Latif. He looked forward to their continued support over the year as his consorts. He also thanked the Mayor and Councillors as well as the Democratic Services Team, who had supported him with his work.

The Speaker also confirmed his decision to keep the same charities that he announced last year. These were: Capital Kids Cricket, Patchwork Foundation and Sottyten School of Performing Arts. He hoped to start holding fundraising events soon.

He also looked forward to arranging a Speaker's reception event once the restrictions had lifted.

Turning to recent events, he spoke with deep regret about the international conflict between Israel and Palestine. The Speaker felt that the conflict showed the importance of communities working together for everyone's peace and prosperity. The Speaker called on everyone including governments to work together to stop the killing of innocent people.

## 2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker sought nominations to serve as Deputy Speaker of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year. It was **moved** by Mayor John Biggs, **seconded** by Councillor Sabina Akhtar, and:

### RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Zenith Rahman be elected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council meeting in May 2022.

## 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Marc Francis
- Councillor Victoria Obaze
- Councillor John Pierce

**4. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS**

Councillor Andrew Wood declared a Non - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda item 11, Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan - Post Referendum Adoption. This was on the grounds of his membership of the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum and that he was the Secretary of the Forum.

**5. MINUTES****RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on 17 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

The Speaker of the Council congratulated Sadiq Khan and Unmesh Desai on their re – election as Mayor of London and the local Greater London Assembly Member (respectively). He also congratulated everyone else successfully elected to the GLA Assembly. Turning to other election news, he confirmed the results of the Tower Hamlets Governance Referendum, which was to retain the Mayoral Model.

The Speaker also confirm that the referendum on the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan had returned a positive result (which was the subject of item 11).

The Chief Executive also provided an update to the Council meeting on the following:

- Covid 19 and Vaccines. Over 100,000 Tower Hamlets residents had now received the vaccine. The Council were working hard with the NHS to ensure that the most vulnerable residents received a vaccine.
- Staffing. He expressed sincere condolences at the sad death of Ronke Martins-Taylor, Divisional Director, Youth and Commissioning. Ronke will be remembered for her dedicated service to the Borough.
- He also welcomed to the Council, Stephen Nayakatawa as the Director of Education who joined in May. He thanked Pauline Maddison who would be leaving the Council shortly, for covering this post. He also reported that Raj Chand will be commencing duties as the Director, of Customer Services on 1<sup>st</sup> June and thanked Teresa Heaney for her work in this role.
- Council Award success. In February, the Council won the Millie's Mark for Nurseries Award for it's outstanding work in relation children's first aid (TH Holiday Child Care Scheme)
- In April, the Council submitted nominations for the MJ 2021 Awards for responding to the climate change emergency.

- Elections. The Elections and the referendums had now taken place. He thanked the staff involved in the elections for all their hard work.

## **7. MAYOR'S CABINET AND EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer setting out the Mayor's Cabinet appointments and other arrangements in respect of Executive Decision Making, as set out in the published supplementary agenda.

The recommendation was agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Mayor's Executive Decision Making scheme be noted

## **8. PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES ON COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2021/22**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer proposing the establishment of the Council's committees for 2021/22 and setting out the review of proportionality and the allocation of places on those Committees. Members noted that the figures for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should read: 9 Members, 8 Labour and 1 Conservative.

The recommendations were agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Council agree:

1. The review of proportionality as at Section 3 of the report and the allocation of seats on Committees and Panels for the Municipal Year 2020/21 as set out at paragraph 3.6 of the report subject to the following amendment for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: that it comprises: 9 Members, 8 Labour and 1 Conservative.
2. To establish the Committees set out for the municipal year 2021/22, and for places to be allocated on those Committees, as set out at Paragraph 3.6.

**9. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2021-22**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer regarding the appointment of members to the Council's Committees, and Chairs where appropriate, (including those established under item 8 above). The list of nominations were published in a supplementary agenda.

Following the receipt of two nominations for the positions of: Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Chair of the Audit Committee, and Chair of the Strategic Development, the nominations were put to a vote.

The results were as follows:

- Councillor Mohammed Pappu was elected to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor Val Whitehead was elected to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee.
- Councillor John Pierce was elected as Chair of the Strategic Development Committee (with Councillor Kahar Chowdhury covering the position during Councillor's John Pierce parental leave),

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

The Council agree to:

1. Appoint members and substitute members to the committees and subcommittees of the Council, other bodies and Mayoral Advisors for the municipal year 2021/22 as set out in the list of nominations circulated in the supplementary agenda.
2. Appoint the Chairs of Committees for 2021/22 as set out in the list of nominations published in the supplementary agenda subject to the appointment of:
  - Councillor Mohammed Pappu to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
  - Councillor Val Whitehead to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee.
  - Councillor John Pierce to the position of Chair of the Strategic Development Committee (with Councillor Kahar Chowdhury covering the position during Councillor John Pierce's parental leave).
3. Agree that in relation to any unfilled places within the seats allocated to a particular political group, the Council note that the Director of Legal, as Interim Monitoring Officer has delegated authority subsequently to

agree the appointments to those places in accordance with nominations from the relevant political group.

#### **10. COMMITTEE CALENDAR 2021-22**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer setting out a revised calendar of meetings for the Council, Committees and other meetings for the municipal year 2021/22. The Council noted the change in the Audit Committee meeting date from 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Council agree to:

1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A of the report subject to the change in the Audit Committee date from 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
2. To delegate to the Interim Monitoring Officer authority to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.
3. To note that the Constitution provides for the Monitoring Officer to agree to cancel, amend a meeting or arrange new meetings where required, subject to the requirements of the Council Procedure Rules.
4. To note that the Council procedure rules agreed in relation to the operation of 'virtual' or 'remote' committee meetings (Section 26A of the Constitution) expired on 6 May 2021 and that the Council is now operating under its original Council Meeting Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

#### **11. ISLE OF DOGS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - POST REFERENDUM ADOPTION**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place regarding the adoption of the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan, following the referendum held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Council agree to:

1. To note the result of the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan referendum and adopt the neighbourhood plan, in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 38A.

2. To agree that plan is not implemented until 1 July 2021.

## **12. COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION 2021-22**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer seeking confirmation of the adoption of the Council's Constitution.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. Note the work of the General Purposes Committee and confirm continued adoption of the Constitution as set out in the appendices to the report.
2. Note that the additional Council Procedure Rules agreed to support virtual committee meetings have now expired and no longer form part of the Constitution.
3. Note that the Council will be submitting a response to the Government's consultation on the future of virtual meetings and agree that the Chair of the General Purposes Committee should be consulted before the response is submitted.
4. Agree that the General Purposes Committee should consider the potential advantages to the Council's committees and meetings of the uses of virtual and hybrid meeting technologies.

## **13. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURES**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer regarding the use of special urgency powers during the previous municipal year.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. Note the report on the use of special urgency provisions in relation to Executive Key Decisions be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

Speaker of the Council