

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.33 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 2022

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present in Person:

Mayor John Biggs	
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Rachel Blake	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Work, Economic Growth and Faith)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Housing)
Councillor Sirajul Islam	(Cabinet Member for Community Safety)
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion – (Job Share post as part of Social Inclusion and Public Realm portfolio)

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Sports)
Councillor Asma Islam	(Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning)

Other Councillors In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Mohammed Pappu

Others Present in Person:

Alison Gawthrop Tower Hamlets Education Partnership

Others In Attendance Virtually:

James Courtney NHS North East London CCG

Officers Present in Person:

Thorsten Dreyer	(Corporate Head of Strategy & Improvement)
Emily Fieran-Reed	(Senior Strategy and Policy Manager, Corporate Strategy & Policy, Communities Team, Governance)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Dr Somen Banerjee	(Director of Public Health)
Kevin Bartle	(Corporate Director, Resources & Section 151 Officer)
Stephen Bramah	Head of the Mayor's office)
Terry Bryan	(Service Head (Pupil Access and School Sufficiency))
Michael Darby	(Head of Parking & Mobility Services)
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Sharon Godman	(Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Dan Jones	(Director, Public Realm)
Daniel Kerr	(Strategy and Policy Manager)
Ahsan Khan	(Chief Accountant)
Peter Maskell	(Interim Head of Procurement)
Steve Nyakatawa	(Director of Education)
Damian Patchell	Markets Manager
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Kahar Chowdhury (Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm)
- Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community, for whom Somen Banerjee, Director of Public Health, was deputising.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 9 February be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor made a number of announcements including that:

- This was the last cabinet of the electoral cycle.

- He had visited the scene of the fire in the tall building in Whitechapel. The Council's thoughts were with those affected. He highlighted the Council was actively working on safety in tall buildings.
- Noted International Women's Day and Women's History Month and the campaigning and events taking place in relation to this.
- The Council had approved its budget including growth bids in a number of areas.
- The Council would support those impacted by the war in Ukraine including the arrival of refugees.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were tabled in relation to Agenda Items 6.4 (Service Action Plan: Parking Policy) and 6.7 (Therapy Provision for Children Under 5 with Special Educational Needs). These were considered in relation to the relevant agenda items.

In addition, Councillor Mohammed Pappu, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided Cabinet with an update from their recent meetings. He highlighted that they had explored a number of issues including:

- Looking at the Council's budget proposals.
- Exploring issues and options around the commercial road car pound.
- Had received a call-in on the leisure estate investment plan.
- Progress against the recycling action plan.
- Balance of staff including ethnic and gender breakdowns at senior levels.
- Looking at the Council's response to the impact of Covid-19.
- Scrutinised performance against the council's strategy and budget.
- Considered the Committee's workplan for the new year.

Finally, he thanked the Mayor, Members and officers for their support of the Scrutiny function over the last four years.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Pappu for his update and thanked Scrutiny for their work over the municipal cycle.

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

It was noted that there had been a call-in of Agenda Item 6.5 (Leisure Estate Investment Plan) of the Cabinet Agenda on 9 February 2022. This had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had decided that the decision could proceed and did not refer it back to Cabinet.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Annual Equality Report 2020-21

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Equalities, introduced the annual noting report on equalities. She highlighted that the report provided an overview of equalities issues in the borough and enabled the council to look at issues such as structural racism, poverty and digital inclusion and identify actions to take.

A range of work around women's safety had been undertaken on the back of recent events and the Council was working with volunteers and champions to support local women.

She thanked all Cabinet Members for supporting this agenda when prioritising work in their own portfolio areas. A lot of excellent work was being undertaken and many of the highlights were set out in the report.

The Cabinet discussed the report and noted the importance of working with the Council's partners on this area of work.

The Mayor welcomed the report and hoped that the actions could be built on in the future. He proposed the recommendations as set out. These were unanimously agreed by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the contents of the Tower Hamlets Council Annual Equality Report at Appendix 1 to the report.

6.2 Strategic delivery and performance reporting – Q3 2021/22

The Mayor introduced the quarterly strategic delivery and performance report. He highlighted that performance reporting was useful in encouraging the Council to look to continuously improve. There was a challenging backdrop to the Council's performance, particularly in relation to the impact of Covid-19. However, the report highlighted many areas of good performance such as around safeguarding, customer services etc, as well as areas that required more work such as school attendance.

Finally, he noted that the report had been debated at Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier in the week.

The Cabinet discussed the report and noted a number of points including around:

- Good work on supporting small businesses during Covid-19.
- The large keystart programme to get young people into work.
- Strong action on violence against women and girls.

The Mayor proposed the recommendations as set out. These were agreed unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the strategic delivery and performance report for quarter 3 of 2021/22;
2. To note that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on service delivery in some parts of the council;
3. To note the performance of the strategic measures, including those measures where the minimum expectation has been missed.

6.3 Budget monitoring report 2021-22 – P9 (including Capital)

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the quarterly budget monitoring report. She highlighted the forecast for a slight overspend on general fund at year end. The schools budget had a forecast for a slight underspend.

The Housing Revenue Account and the Health Grant were both showing small underspends.

However, the Covid-19 impact was still likely to be variable and was being closely monitored. Some impacts such as lower council tax collection rates were being seen. There were still big risks in some areas such as around homelessness.

The Mayor welcomed the report. He highlighted that all Cabinet Members monitored the budget forecasts in relation to their areas. He proposed the recommendations as set out. These were agreed unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the Council's projected outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget, Housing Revenue Account and earmarked reserves for 2021-22, based on forecasts as at 31st December 2021;
2. To note the reserves position of the Council is uncertain pending the closure of the statement of accounts for the period 2016 – 2021;
3. To note the progress made against the 2021-22 savings targets, based on forecasts as at 31st December 2021;
4. To note the Council's projected outturn position against General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programme approved budgets, based on forecasts as at 31st December 2021;

5. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

6.4 Service action plan: response to OSC recommendations from the Parking scrutiny challenge session

The Mayor introduced the report on a service action plan in relation to parking policy. This action plan followed a scrutiny challenge session. He highlighted the challenges of managing parking in such a densely populated borough.

He noted the Pre-Decision Question and officer response and proposed the recommendation as set out. This was unanimously approved by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the report of the Parking scrutiny challenge on “the extent to which the council’s parking permit policy influences people’s behaviour” and agree the service action plan in response to the report recommendations.

6.5 London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022 - 2027

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman, Cabinet Member for Work, Economic Growth and Faith, introduced the report proposing improvements for the borough’s markets.

The Council had undergone significant consultation with stakeholders whilst developing this plan and would continue to do so, in particular with the markets themselves.

The Mayor welcomed the report. He noted that the borough had a large number of markets and a significant history with markets to support. He proposed the recommendations as set out. These were agreed unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To adopt the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022-2027.
2. To note the individual action plans for each of our 10 street markets.
3. To note the positive equalities impact as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report.

6.6 Annual Schools Report 2020 -2021

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities, introduced the Annual Schools report. It provided an overview of the work of local schools during the 2020-21 year and it particularly set out the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Leaders and teachers had been doing an amazing job adapting their teaching to remote working and continuing to ensure that young people were able to learn and develop over this period. It was worth noting in particular that the children in care had been performing well over the year. The report also set out the impact of a number of council strategies such as those around improving digital access.

The Mayor thanked the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership for supporting education and children in the borough. He proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. These were approved unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To continue to develop school capacity in supporting children and young people with SEND
2. To develop consistently high-quality employment, education and training pathways for young people of all abilities and interests and,
3. To work with any school that has significantly underachieved to improve standards through effective leadership, data analysis and improved teaching and learning strategies.

6.7 Therapy Provision for Children Under 5 with Special Education Needs and Disabilities Proposal

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities introduced the report recommending the commissioning of Barts Health to provide contracts for much needed investment for therapy for under 5s with Special Educational Needs.

The first strand provided Speech and Language treatment for children aged 3 to 5 through a number of new clinical pathways. The second procurement was to provide children under 5 with suspected autism or social communication difficulties with new therapy options.

The report was asking for a Cabinet decision as it was a proposal for a direct award of the contracts. It was noted that further reports to develop this area of support would be presented to future Cabinet meetings.

The Mayor noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Question and officer response and proposed the recommendation as set out in the report. This was unanimously agreed by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the commissioning of Bart's Health via a direct award for a two year contract to deliver the following therapies provision: (a) Speech and Language Treatment (SLT) for Children in Tower Hamlets age 3-5 and (b) SLT and Occupational Therapy (OT) Treatment for Children age 0-5 with social communication difficulties (value of the contract: £343,174 per annum, total cost over two years: £686,348).

6.8 Preston's Road Roundabout – Two Towers East

The Mayor introduced the report proposing highway advertising at Preston's Road roundabout. The Council has a contract for advertising and this report was looking to refresh that contract. The sum was above the delegated threshold so it was at Cabinet for decision. The Mayor noted the appendix which was exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 due to it containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of the authority.

The Mayor proposed the recommendations as set out and these were approved unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To authorise the Corporate Director Place to enter into an appropriate land related agreement to allow Ocean Outdoor UK Ltd to continue to license a site at Preston's Road Roundabout subject to the agreement of appropriate legal terms and conditions.
2. To authorise the Corporate Director Place to authorise the execution of any and all agreements, licences and if necessary, registrations necessary to give use of the land known as Preston's Road roundabout,
3. The above recommendations are subject to the Director of Legal being satisfied that the best consideration requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 are being met if applicable to the terms of the Contact.

6.9 Report on the outcome of representations received in response to the statutory (public) notice to amalgamate Marion Richardson and Old Church Nursery Schools

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities presented the report proposing the amalgamation of Marion Richardson Primary School and Old Church Nursey School. The proposals had been out for formal consultation including a formal

statutory notice. It was noted that both schools already worked closely together.

The Mayor noted the results of the consultation and proposed the recommendations as set out. These were approved unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the report and its supporting documents, particularly the statutory notice (Appendix 1 to the report) and the Equality Assessment (Appendix 2 to the report), along with comments made by respondents to the Statutory Notice.
2. To agree to the amalgamation (merger) of Marion Richardson Primary and Old Church Nursery schools to form an all-through 3 to 11 years' primary school, taking effect from 1st September 2022.

6.10 Contracts Forward Plan 2021/22 – Quarter Four

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector introduced the report setting out the contracts forward plan. The report provided visibility to Cabinet on all high value contracts. She drew Members attention to recommendation three in relation to dealing with inflation increases to contracts.

Cabinet discussed the report and confirmed they were content to allow all contracts in Appendix 1 to the report to proceed to contract award.

RESOLVED

1. To note the contract summary at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. To agree that all contracts set out in Appendix 1 to the report can proceed to contract award after tender.
3. Due to inflationary pressures impacting contract sums and staffing cost pressures, authorise the relevant Corporate Director following consultation with the Corporate Director, Resources to agree a change to the Value Total shown in a particular contract in Appendix 1 to the report by not more than either £100,000 or 10% of the original Value Total whichever is the greater. Any change approved will only be as a result of evidenced inflationary pressures.
4. To authorise the Director of Legal to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts referred to at recommendation 2 above.
5. To note the procurement forward plan 2022-27 set out in Appendix 2.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**7.1 Record of Corporate Director's Actions**

The Mayor introduced the report setting out a record of recent corporate director decisions. He confirmed the reasons for urgency which were that the report was not ready due to an administrative error but it had been presented as it was important the decisions were noted during this municipal year.

The Mayor proposed the recommendation as set out. This was unanimously agreed by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the Record of Corporate Directors' Actions set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

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. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 6.38 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS