

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2022

**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 Sufia Alam (maternity leave)
- Councillor Shah Ameen
- Councillor Ayas Miah
- Councillor Puru Miah
- Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
- Councillor Krysten Perry

Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillors Marc Francis and Danny Hassell

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were reported.

3. MINUTES

DECISION:

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

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

See minutes

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

Maya Nessa and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Sports 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:** James Thomas, Corporate Director, Children and Culture)

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented his report to the Council.

The Opposition Group Leader's then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

- Councillor Peter Golds, Leader of the Conservative Group.
- Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Leader of the Aspire Group.

The Mayor provided concluding remarks.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE - HOUSING DELIVERY

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Andrew Wood **moved** and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded** an amendment to the motion (as set out in the supplementary agenda).

Added text is underlined

Deleted text is scored out.

This Council notes that:

1. The housing crisis is the greatest challenge facing London today. Having an affordable, secure home is difficult for many people due to rising private rents and a lack of genuinely affordable homes.
2. That the population in the Tower Hamlets borough is one of the fastest growing in London.
3. As of 6th December 2021, Tower Hamlets Council has delivered the following:
 1. 827 ~~new~~ homes – ~~completed and~~ occupied. These are a combination of new build (including 157 (tbc) properties built by private developers as s106 housing) and ~~purchases of old homes~~ the purchase of 422 old properties including:
 - 173 Right to Buy properties
 - 224 from Poplar Harca (but not from any other housing association)

- 25 out of Borough (many in Erith it appears)
 2. 224 new build homes are on site and under construction.
 3. 184 new build homes awaiting contractor appointment, finances approved and planning secured.
- 4. Additionally, we are working on the next phase of new council homes, including:
 1. 42 homes with planning permission secured and funding being finalised.
 2. 451 mainly new build homes have been allocated funding and are moving towards planning permission
 3. 318 further homes are in the pipeline or in appraisal.
- 5. In total this would total 2,046 additional council homes including homes that would have been bought by or were already owned by housing associations so the net increase in affordable homes is a lot less than 2,046
- 6. The successful securing of £32m in grant funding from the Mayor of London's Affordable Housing Programme to fund an additional 194 new homes for social rent in the borough. London got £3,465 million for new affordable homes in the most recent round of government money given to the Mayor of London to allocate within London to Boroughs and housing associations. Tower Hamlets Council only got £32 million of this money (or 0.9% of the total) for 194 homes (0.7% of the total). By comparison Tower Hamlets has been set a target to deliver 6.6% of all new homes in London. Some other housing associations based in Tower Hamlets like Poplar Harca have got money as well. By contrast Barking & Dagenham Council got £171 million and Newham Council £92 million.
- 7. The introduction of a local lettings plan where 25% of completed homes can be let to households on the Common Housing Register who already live on the estates where the new homes are built: for example; Jubilee Street.
- 8. The development and launch of the Intermediate Housing Register of Interest (launched 1st October 2021), which will give initial priority and access to local residents for all new intermediate housing in the borough.
- 9. The approval of the 'Affordable Self-Build' Programme with the first 2 of 4 sites having been awarded to the community self-build groups.
- 10. Since 2015/16 to December 2021, registered providers have delivered over 5,900 new affordable homes in the borough mostly built by private sector developers as part of their s106 planning obligations. Most of these are in Isle of Dogs, Aldgate and Aberfeldy areas.

11. The housing revenue account is used to fund new homes, but also manage current housing and deliver improvements to existing council homes.
12. In the new Tall Building SPD the Council suggests locations for 62 new tall buildings across Tower Hamlets (in addition to those already in the planning system), 56 of them or 90% in the E14 area
 - i) 45 new buildings on the Isle of Dogs & South Poplar - 18 to the south of Canary Wharf plus 27 to the north in Poplar & Billingsgate
 - ii) 11 in the Lower Lea Valley - in the Aberfeldy area
 - iii) 4 City Fringe - 2 in Aldgate, 2 next to the Royal London Hospital
 - iv) 2 Central - in Queen Mary area - this is the biggest area in TH & parts have excellent transport links

This Council believes that:

1. That Tower Hamlets is on the frontline in the battle to tackle the capital's housing crisis, and is working with the Mayor of London to do our bit to help solve it using government grant money allocated by the Mayor of London, borrowing from the governments Public Work Loans Board (helped when Theresa May lifted the borrowing cap), developer contributions as part of their s106 obligations, current and future rental income and Right to Buy receipts.
2. We should continue to work with registered providers to deliver good quality and affordable homes for residents and not compete with them to buy new s106 housing that they would have bought instead of us.
3. Whilst there have been some changes to the use of 'Right to Buy' (RTB) receipts, councils should be permitted to allocate 100% of receipts to deliver new council housing and also combine RTB receipts to other grant funding for schemes.
4. The government should provide sufficient funding to councils and other housing associations to meet targets on carbon neutral homes and to address fire and building safety, helping reduce the pressures on funding available for building new homes.
5. We need genuinely affordable homes developed with the right infrastructure in the right place.
6. We need to demonstrate our ability to look after buildings that we own, to have a maintenance plan in place, to have a long-term strategy of renewal and replacement of equipment in place and to deal with climate change through making our energy intensive leisure centres and our residential communal boilers carbon neutral.

This Council resolves:

1. To share this motion with the Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Communities and Housing to share the good work that the Council is

doing to provide housing in the borough and to call for the Government to work with all Local Authorities to help resolve the housing crisis once and for all.

2. To lobby for changes to use of right to buy receipts and for funding to support councils and housing associations to deliver new homes and improve the quality of their existing stock.
3. To continue to work with the Mayor of London and the Deputy Mayor for Housing to ensure more genuinely affordable housing is built for those in need.
4. To support the Mayor and Cabinet in ongoing work to deliver more genuinely affordable homes and the vital infrastructure that must go alongside housing.
5. Not to lose any more Right to Buy receipts because the money was not spent in time (even if the government now agree that money can be held by the GLA)
6. To provide a detailed breakdown of the homes being acquired in order to make clearer:
 1. The age of buildings acquired and the cost of their renovation
 2. Which wards they are located in and from whom we bought them
 3. Who manages them
 4. Whether we bought them in competition with other housing associations, which might run the risk of an overall reduction in the delivery of new affordable homes in Tower Hamlets
 5. Whether genuinely new build homes commissioned by this Council since June 2015

This amendment was put to the vote and was **defeated**

This motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes that:

1. The housing crisis is the greatest challenge facing London today. Having an affordable, secure home is difficult for many people due to rising private rents and a lack of genuinely affordable homes.
2. That the population in the Tower Hamlets borough is one of the fastest growing in London.
3. As of 6th December 2021, Tower Hamlets Council has delivered the following:

- a. 827 new homes. – completed and occupied. These are a combination of new build and purchases.
 - b. 224 new build homes are on site and under construction.
 - c. 184 new build homes awaiting contractor appointment, finances approved and planning secured.
4. Additionally, we are working on the next phase of new council homes, including:
 - a. 42 homes with planning permission secured and funding being finalised.
 - b. 451 mainly new build homes have been allocated funding and are moving towards planning permission
 - c. 318 further homes are in the pipeline or in appraisal.
 5. In total this would total 2,046 additional council homes
 6. The successful securing of £32m in grant funding from the Mayor of London's Affordable Housing Programme to fund an additional 194 new homes for social rent in the borough.
 7. The introduction of a local lettings plan where 25% of completed homes can be let to households on the Common Housing Register who already live on the estates where the new homes are built: for example; Jubilee Street.
 8. The development and launch of the Intermediate Housing Register of Interest (launched 1st October 2021), which will give initial priority and access to local residents for all new intermediate housing in the borough.
 9. The approval of the 'Affordable Self-Build' Programme with the first 2 of 4 sites having been awarded to the community self-build groups.
 10. Since 2015/16 to December 2021, registered providers have delivered over 5,900 new affordable homes in the borough.
 11. The housing revenue account is used to fund new homes, but also manage current housing and deliver improvements to existing council homes.

This Council believes that:

1. That Tower Hamlets is on the frontline in the battle to tackle the capital's housing crisis, and is working with the Mayor of London to do our bit to help solve it.
2. We should continue to work with registered providers to deliver good quality and affordable homes for residents.
3. Whilst there have been some changes to the use of 'Right to Buy' (RTB) receipts, councils should be permitted to allocate 100% of receipts to deliver new council housing and also combine RTB receipts to other grant funding for schemes.
4. The government should provide sufficient funding to councils and other housing associations to meet targets on carbon neutral homes and to address fire and building safety, helping reduce the pressures on funding available for building new homes.
5. We need genuinely affordable homes developed with the right infrastructure.

This Council resolves:

1. To share this motion with the Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Communities and Housing to share the good work that the Council is doing to provide housing in the borough and to call for the Government to work with all Local Authorities to help resolve the housing crisis once and for all.
2. To lobby for changes to use of right to buy receipts and for funding to support councils and housing associations to deliver new homes and improve the quality of their existing stock.
3. To continue to work with the Mayor of London and the Deputy Mayor for Housing to ensure more genuinely affordable housing is built for those in need.
4. To support the Mayor and Cabinet in ongoing work to deliver more genuinely affordable homes and the vital infrastructure that must go alongside housing.

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

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

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

The motion was put to a vote and was **defeated**.

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**9.1 Report of Cabinet: Annual Plan for the Youth Justice Board 2021/22**

The Council considered the report of Cabinet setting out the Annual Plan for the Youth Justice Board 2021/22 under the Budget and Policy Framework Procedures.

DECISION:

1. Approve the Annual Youth Justice Plan 2021-22 for Tower Hamlets and the City of London.

(Action by: James Thomas, Corporate Director, Children and Culture)

9.2 Report of the Audit Committee: Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2021-22

The Council considered the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2021-22

DECISION:

1. To note the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2021-22

(Action by: Kevin Bartle, Interim Corporate Director, Resources (s.151 Officer))

9.3 Report of the General Purposes Committee: Post-election polling places review 2021

The Council considered the report of the General Purposes Committee setting out the post-election polling places review 2021.

DECISION:

1. To note the conclusions of the post-election review of polling places in Tower Hamlets.
2. To note the responses received and to approve the polling place proposals set out in the report.
3. To agree that where the allocation of a polling place has yet to be determined that the Returning Officer make the final decision to allocate places for the polls to be held in May 2022.

(Action by: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer)

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Updates to the Mayor's Executive Scheme of Delegation

The Council considered the report setting out updates to the Mayor's Executive Scheme of Delegation

DECISION:

1. Note the changes to the Executive Scheme of Delegations.

(Action by: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer)

10.2 Appointment of Independent Persons

The Council considered the report regarding the Appointment of Independent Persons

DECISION:

1. Appoint Amanda Orchard as an Independent Person with effect from 20 January 2022 for a four year term of office.
2. Re-appoint Rachael Tiffin as an Independent Person for a second four-year term of office with effect from 20 January 2022.

3. To note that the remuneration for an Independent Person is currently set at £1000/year.

(Action by: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer)

11. 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:

- 11.1 Question from Councillor Amina Ali about progress with the Covid – 19 vaccination programme roll out in the Borough. No supplementary question was asked.
- 11.2 Question from Councillor Kabir Ahmed about the Council's use of the 'AP1' vouchers procedures.
- 11.3 Question from Councillor Leema Qureshi regarding the Council's activities to celebrate Victory Day to mark the independence of Bangladesh. No supplementary question was asked.
- 11.4 Question from Councillor Peter Golds about the Council's engagement with the Royal Borough of Greenwich. This was in regard to the non-working lift(s) at Island Gardens and Cutty Sark serving the Greenwich foot tunnel.
- 11.5 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed about progress with supporting the borough's COVID recovery. No supplementary question was asked
- 11.6 Question from Councillor Harun Miah requesting an update on the very tragic incident at Nida House, Sutton street. No supplementary question was asked.
- 11.7 Question from Councillor Zenith Rahman about the number of electric charging points installed in the Borough including those installed by this administration since 2018. No supplementary question was asked
- 11.8 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood regarding the amount of s106, Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus money in the Council's bank account, as at the end of 2021. No supplementary question was asked
- 11.9 Question from Councillor Marc Francis about the actions that the Council has taken to support residents of Clare House during the recent emergency situation.
- 11.10 Question from Councillor Dan Tomlinson requesting an update on the URS waste collection issues

11.12 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze regarding measures to prevent vandalism in the Borough. No supplementary question was asked

11.13 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan about the St George's Pool consultation exercise. This was in terms of the approach to reaching out to vulnerable people.

Question 11.11 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. A written response would be provided to this question. (Note the written response will follow)

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

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 Motion regarding Memorial to the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

Councillor Sabina Akhtar **moved** and Councillor Rachel Blake **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda

DECISION:

This Council believes:

1. We have a proud modern history in Tower Hamlets of championing diversity and standing up to discrimination, but there is more we can do
2. That historically under-represented groups should be remembered in the public realm
3. That the women and girls who took part in the Match Factory Strike of 1888 were pioneers of the Labour Movement (see notes)

This Council notes:

1. The Council has pro-actively undertaken a review of race and equality in the public realm.
2. The purpose of the review was to share thoughts about under-representation in public spaces – not only in terms of race, but also on issues across the equalities landscape including but not limited to civil rights, workers', women's and LGBTQ+ rights and more.
3. The review asked the community identify and nominate other names, particularly of under-represented groups, who have done something memorable and who we should celebrate.

This Council resolves:

1. To welcome ideas for remembering the Matchwomen and Matchgirls who fought for their employment rights

2. To work with the Matchgirls Memorial Trust to remember the struggle of the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

(Action by: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place/Mayor's Office.)

(Motions 12.2- 12.3 were not considered due to lack of time).

The meeting ended at 10.05 p.m.