

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2022

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

During the meeting the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Decision Sheet is presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

Councillor Rajib Ahmed
Councillor Sufia Alam (maternity leave)
Councillor Amina Ali
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan
Councillor Eve McQuillan
Councillor Kyrsten Perry
Councillor Val Whitehead

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

No declarations of interest were reported

MINUTES

DECISION:

That the unrestricted minutes of the following meetings of the Council be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly:

Ordinary Council meeting held on Wednesday 19th January 2022
Budget Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd March 2022

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

See minutes

TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

**Petition regarding Refuse & Recycling is collected on time –
Keep our streets clean**

Michael Robinson and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION

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

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

Petition regarding Say no to underpass closure and overdevelopment of Aberfeldy

Foysool Hussain and others 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

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

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

Petition regarding prolonged road closure from Colliers (developer) risks residents' lives

Shorif Ahmed and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Housing then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION

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

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

Petition regarding New Riverboat Service at Wapping Pier

Dominic Buxton and others 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

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

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

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

The Mayor provided concluding remarks

ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE - COUNCIL'S RECORD

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Asma Begum **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Peter Golds **moved** and Councillor Andrew Wood **seconded** the following amendment as set out in the supplementary agenda

Added text is underlined

Deleted text is scored ~~out~~.

This Council Notes:

In 2018, the Mayor pledged 2,000 new council homes by 2022, and the Council is on track to hit this target, with 2,046 homes delivered or in delivery. There have also been 6,876 new affordable homes completed across the borough since 2015.

That the 700 new homes promised as part of the wider Town Hall project have never been delivered (see the poster in the entrance to Mulberry Place)

That the Council intends to sell large sites to private developers (Car pound for example) rather than develop themselves and when it has sold those sites to private developers (LEB for example) no new homes have been built years later.

That the Council has displacing existing residents from 422 homes who now have to compete in the housing market meaning more people may need to rely on temporary housing.

That the Council only bought existing old homes from one housing association, Poplar Harca, providing them with a cash injection, that this opportunity was not extended to other housing associations. And again, has displaced existing residents.

That the Council bought 157 existing s106 properties so that they can be presented as new homes when they are not, they would

have been bought by another housing association and provided to residents of Tower Hamlets in need.

That only 225 homes are genuinely new build plus 23 conversions, but this has in some cases meant the loss of scarce green space.

Only these 225 + 23 homes can be genuinely described as new Council homes.

That this Council provides Universal Free School Meals for all primary school children in the borough, one of only a few councils in the country that does this. This costs the council £3m per year, and means that 19,000 children get a meal, equating to an estimated saving for families of £450 per child.

Although tackling crime and ASB is a police responsibility, the Council are investing in tackling crime and ASB by funding additional police officers and a council-operated ASB service. It has also set up a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection order to tackle the misuse of laughing gas and the associated ASB.

The Conservative group welcome the adoption of the borough-wide NOX Public Space Protection Order that we suggested several years before its adoption.

We regret that other ideas we have suggested have not been adopted to reduce ASB.

That residents have had to flee their homes after a home invasion following vehicle related ASB.

That we also need Public Spaces Protection Orders to deal with all vehicle related ASB including tunnel runs, vehicle based parties, and noisy cars.

The Council is also investing over £3m in an upgrade to the entire public space CCTV network in part to allow the relocation of the CCTV control room from Mulberry Place to the new Town Hall.

That new residential areas in Tower Hamlets including some of the densest places in the UK have no Council CCTV cameras. The network largely reflects residential areas several decades ago.

That the opportunity to use technology like acoustic cameras to monitor noisy drivers is not being taken.

The Council has supported over 7,000 people into jobs or training since 2016, including supporting 1,052 young people, and created more than 1,000 apprenticeships.

In part paid for by s106 contributions from developers.

The Council's multi-million pound Tackling Poverty Fund has invested £6.6 million since 2017 in innovative programmes to support residents affected by welfare reforms. Last year it also provided over £750,000 in Crisis Grants through our Resident Support Scheme.

The current administration's work in turning the council around after the failures of the previous mayor. Tower Hamlets Council has transformed from being directly partially run by Government Commissioners in the wake of the former mayor's removal from office into an award-winning council but which still fails to deliver in a number of areas, for example:

Failing OFSTED in 2017, being required to write an improvement plan after the most recent SEND inspection.

That the financial accounts for three years now have not been signed off yet after multiple failings were found by our new auditors.

Having the lowest recycling rate in London and the 2nd lowest in the country

Failing to ensure the long-term condition of Tiller Road Leisure Centre, York Hall and St Georges Baths so that they could not re-open last year and that we will lose 1/5 of our swimming provision for 6 years as a result.

Failing to build the much-delayed new South Quay Bridge.

Losing access to GLA money for Poplar Riverside.

That it has lost more than £30 million through inflation in the last 4 years.

1. The Council's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission has set out recommendations for how we make our community fairer and more equal. It is currently delivering on these, and backing this up with over £1.5m of council funding to meet the ambitious targets set forth by the Commission.

That 59% of the Council staff are BAME as at December 2021 but only 30.17% of staff earning more than £60k are BAME, that this has dropped from 32.14% in December 2019. That it still does not understand why or in which department this happened in.

The relative pay of its own BAME staff has got worse.

2. The Council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and the council has committed to become a net zero carbon council by 2025 and a net zero carbon borough by 2045 or sooner. In 2021, Tower Hamlets Council was named the greenest local authority in the country purely on the energy efficiency of housing in the borough, with so many new apartments built since the 1980's inevitably we have more energy efficient homes than other Boroughs with an older housing stock, this was not due to any direct action by the Council.

That in 2020 it bought a whole new fleet of diesel-powered refuse vehicles (after the City of London started trialing electric

only refuse vehicles) and installed diesel storage tanks at its transport facility. That only one Council building has any form of renewable energy. That no Council building has any electric vehicle chargers because the Council has no purely electric road vehicles.

3. The Council funds a 100% council tax discount for the poorest in our community, one of the few places in the UK to offer this, meaning the poorest in Tower Hamlets don't have to pay a single penny of council tax. For the financial year 2021/22 the Council has so far awarded £33m in Council Tax Support to nearly 34,000 council taxpayers.

This reflects the failure for a generation now by Tower Hamlets Council to get so many of its residents into good jobs that would allow residents to be able to pay Council tax without help.

This Council believes:

1. Despite Council successes in the past four years, there is still more to be done to tackle the future challenges faced by Tower Hamlets residents.

But that its capacity for improvement is inadequate, that the Council is unable to do its day job in some areas, that it gets distracted whenever something goes wrong. That it remains a very small conservative organization, incapable and unwilling to take any risk.

This Council resolves:

1. To continue its good work in tackling poverty and addressing inequalities in the borough, and delivering on residents' priorities.
2. To work diligently with residents, partner agencies and the Mayor of London to ensure Tower Hamlets residents are supported in these uncertain times, and to listen to the concerns put forward by Tower Hamlets residents.
3. To work with other London boroughs to ensure good ideas and strategy can be shared and implemented for the benefit of all Londoners.
4. To focus relentlessly on delivery.
5. To have a clear plan for delivery
6. To change its culture and be more willing to do new things and to take appropriate risks.
7. To be more transparent in its comms activities about delivery.

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

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

DECISION:

This Council Notes:

1. In 2018, the Mayor pledged 2,000 new council homes by 2022, and the Council is on track to hit this target, with 2,046 homes delivered or in delivery. There have also been 6,876 new affordable homes completed across the borough since 2015.
2. That this Council provides Universal Free School Meals for all primary school children in the borough, one of only a few councils in the country that does this. This costs the council £3m per year, and means that 19,000 children get a meal, equating to an estimated saving for families of £450 per child.
3. Although tackling crime and ASB is a police responsibility, the Council are investing in tackling crime and ASB by funding additional police officers and a council-operated ASB service. It has also set up a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection order to tackle the misuse of laughing gas and the associated ASB.
4. The Council is also investing over £3m in an upgrade to the entire public space CCTV network.
5. The Council has supported over 7,000 people into jobs or training since 2016, including supporting 1,052 young people, and created more than 1,000 apprenticeships.
6. The Council's multi-million pound Tackling Poverty Fund has invested £6.6 million since 2017 in innovative programmes to support residents affected by welfare reforms. Last year it also provided over £750,000 in Crisis Grants through our Resident Support Scheme.
7. The current administration's work in turning the council around after the failures of the previous mayor. Tower Hamlets Council has transformed from being directly run by Government Commissioners in the wake of the former mayor's removal from office into an award-winning council.
8. The Council's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission has set out recommendations for how we make our community fairer and more equal. It is currently delivering on these, and backing this up with over £1.5m of council funding to meet the ambitious targets set forth by the Commission.
9. The Council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and the council has committed to become a net zero carbon council by 2025 and a net zero carbon borough by 2045 or sooner. In 2021, Tower Hamlets Council was named the greenest local authority in the country.
10. The Council funds a 100% council tax discount for the poorest in our community, one of the few places in the UK to offer this, meaning the poorest in Tower Hamlets don't have to pay a single penny of council tax. For the financial year 2021/22 the Council has so far awarded £33m in Council Tax Support to nearly 34,000 council taxpayers.

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2. To work diligently with residents, partner agencies and the Mayor of London to ensure Tower Hamlets residents are supported in these uncertain times, and to listen to the concerns put forward by Tower Hamlets residents.
3. To work with other London boroughs to ensure good ideas and strategy can be shared and implemented for the benefit of all Londoners.

(Action by: Will Tuckley, Chief Executive/Mayor's Office)

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE - WHITECHAPEL MARKET

Councillor Kabir Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Harun Miah **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Motin Uz – Zaman **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the following amendment as set out in the supplementary agenda

Added text is underlined

~~Deleted text is scored out.~~

This Council notes:

The Whitechapel Market was established nearly 120 years ago in 1904. In 1909, the Council bought the strip from Vallance Road to Mile End Gate.

Leading up to that, in the 1850s there were stalls and costermongers' barrows along the north side of Whitechapel Road from St Mary (Davenant) Street to Charrington's Brewery in Mile End Old Town. Some sections of the waste were given over to the setting- out of furniture and, street junctions aside, paved cart roads separated the ground at several points.

In 1904 Stepney Council sought to take control of the market on the waste in both Whitechapel and Mile End to regulate nuisance traders. Terms were agreed with the Manor in 1909 and the Council acquired strips on both north and south sides from Vallance Road east into Mile End where gardens were laid out in 1909–10. Thus regulated, trading west of Mile End Gate came to be called Whitechapel Market. It was noted in the 1970s for clothing, jewellery, flowers, second-hand records and hi-fi equipment.

By the 1980s, when there were 124 pitches between Vallance Road and Cambridge Heath Road, the market was being transformed by a transition to the latest edition of East Enders, Bangladeshi stallholders. They remain the predominant community trading in the Whitechapel Market with a wide range

of items for all in the community including idiosyncratic products including clothing as well delicious food and delicacies hard to come by elsewhere.

In 1997 the Whitechapel conservation area was established and later renewed in 2008. It has seen various communities pass through including the French Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews and currently the Bangladeshis. It is a market that exemplifies market street trade. By the 1980s the Market was established from Vallance road to Cambridge Heath Road. In 2008 the Whitechapel Market became the market in the UK to recycle its waste.

The Market's street furniture was renewed as part of the High Street 2012 project. Alan Baxter & Associates and East Architecture Landscape Urban Design oversaw standardisation of demountable market stalls, and the additions of perforated metal screens to face the road and catenary lighting along the pavement on a row of standards, as well as new bollards and seating.

In 2021, Tower Hamlets Council launched an extensive survey with traders, business owners, residents and visitors of Whitechapel Market. All were asked what changes they would like to see, and the responses then went out to public consultation and have been included in the Action Plan 2022-25.

One of the things that traders were strongly in favour of was new stalls to be provided. This is a current project funded by a Levelling Up Grant and part of the Whitechapel Road Improvement Program (WRIP).

The Council has conducted face to face consultation with traders on the design of the stalls. The next one planned for mid-March. This will inform the stall pilot scheme where a number of stalls will be installed to test the design, with feedback from traders informing the final design for the stalls.

There was an increase in pitch fees in Summer 2021, however no further increases are planned for 2021/22.

With regard to 2022/23 Markets are partway through a trader and public consultation on fees, these are broadly in line with inflation.

This Council believes:

That this culturally rich and historic Whitechapel Market is an important part of Tower Hamlets. We understand the concerns that many have about how faces the challenges of gentrification and rising property prices, as well concerns about the cost of living crisis while stall owners are struggling to make a decent income. Furthermore, the current and the continuing economic impact of the pandemic crisis with Covid has left many traders on the verge of collapse which has had such a profound effect on both our national and local economy.

In addition to this, the Tower Hamlets Council is looking to increase the rent for stalls by 40p per day Monday to Friday and £1.00 on Saturdays, which in turn equates to £3.00 a week and £156 per year (11.4%). At times of crisis and where support is needed it seems unethical, inappropriate and cruel that

~~the Council should increase rents now for stakeholders already under serious financial pressure. As this is the case for all market stalls in Tower Hamlets, the Council should freeze rents for all market stalls and consider further support for these unique and local market traders or else this increase by the Council cause them to disappear forever and simply be replaced by gentrified standard pop-up shops that have no real local connection or heritage.~~

This Council Resolves:

- ~~1. To freeze all increases to rent for market stalls in Tower Hamlet for this tax year and undertake a review in the next financial year. To continue working with the traders and business owners in Whitechapel Market see how the Council can assist in these uncertain economic times.~~
- ~~2. To protect the market stallholders from being priced out due to gentrification thereby supporting local history and heritage.~~
- ~~3. Not restrict or set quotas on what can legally be sold. To continue to work with traders at Whitechapel Market and engage with customers to ensure the goods offered are diverse and it offers a wide range of good, so that traders can also apply to change what they are licenced for through a variation each quarter.~~
4. To continue to engage with the stallholders in any changes to the dynamics and processes relating to Whitechapel Market.

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

The motion as amended was put to the vote and was **agreed**

DECISION:

This Council notes:

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Leading up to that, in the 1850s there were stalls and costermongers' barrows along the north side of Whitechapel Road from St Mary (Davenant) Street to Charrington's Brewery in Mile End Old Town. Some sections of the waste were given over to the setting-out of furniture and, street junctions aside, paved cart roads separated the ground at several points.

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the latest edition of East Enders, Bangladeshi stallholders. They remain the predominant community trading in the Whitechapel Market with a wide range of items for all in the community including idiosyncratic products including clothing as well delicious food and delicacies hard to come by elsewhere.

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There was an increase in pitch fees in Summer 2021, however no further increases are planned for 2021/22.

With regard to 2022/23 Markets are partway through a trader and public consultation on fees, these are broadly in line with inflation.

This Council believes:

That this culturally rich and historic Whitechapel Market is an important part of Tower Hamlets. We understand the concerns that many have about gentrification and rising property prices, as well concerns about the cost of living crisis and the continuing economic impact of the pandemic which has had such a profound effect on both our national and local economy.

This Council Resolves:

1. To continue working with the traders and business owners in Whitechapel Market see how the Council can assist in these uncertain economic times.

2. To continue to work with traders at Whitechapel Market and engage with customers to ensure the goods offered are diverse and it offers a wide range of good, so that traders can also apply to change what they are licenced for through a variation each quarter.
3. To continue to engage with the stallholders in any changes to the dynamics and processes relating to Whitechapel Market.

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

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

There were none

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Committee Calendar 2022-23

The Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer regarding the Council's committee calendar.

DECISION:

1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the 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 Annual Meeting of Council on 25 May 2022 may be moved to another venue depending on Covid safety requirements at that time and that should new Covid restrictions be introduced this may also apply to other future meetings.

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

10.2 Members Allowances Scheme 2022-23

The Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer regarding the Members Allowances Scheme.

DECISION:

1. Adopt the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Members' Allowances Scheme 2022/23 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Agree that the Members Allowances Budget be adjusted as necessary to cover the costs following the uprating of the local government pay award as set out at 3.7 of the report.

3. To agree that the General Purposes Committee lead on any required engagement with the upcoming London Independent Remuneration Panel in-depth review of Member Allowances and that the Committee is delegated authority to consider the outcome of that review, reporting back to Council as required for decision.

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

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Due to lack of time, the questions were not considered and written responses will be provided

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

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Due to lack of time, no motions were considered

13. URGENT MOTION

The Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to enable the following urgent motion to be debated without notice:

13.1 Urgent Motion regarding Ukraine

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Tariq Khan **seconded** the motion as tabled.

Following debate, the motion was put to a vote and was **agreed unanimously**.

This Council Notes:

- 1) The Putin regime's illegal invasion of Ukraine is an horrific attack not only on the Ukrainian people, but also on sovereignty, democracy, freedom and the rule of law.
- 2) The Ukrainian people continue to show incredible courage, dignity and resilience in the face of the horrific acts caused by Putin's invasion.
- 3) The many reports of individual and collective acts of bravery in defence of the nation's freedom and democracy, as well as heart-breaking reports about those who have tragically lost their lives because of Putin's actions.
- 4) The devastating plight of refugees from Ukraine who have been forced from their home in the most brutal manner, causing the biggest refugee migration since World War II.
- 5) The open letter signed by all the political groups in Tower Hamlets to the Ukrainian Ambassador to the UK which outlines support for and solidarity with Ukraine.

This Council believes:

- 1) This invasion is due to the actions of President Putin and is not reflective of the Russian population. Many ordinary Russians have bravely protested the attack on Ukraine.
- 2) The Council stands united with both the Ukrainian and Russian communities in Tower Hamlets, and strongly condemns any abuse and harassment of these communities.
- 3) The East End has always been a magnet for opportunity and an area which has welcomed immigration and diversity throughout its history, and this will continue to be the case for our friends from Ukraine.

This Council resolves:

- 1) To work on a united cross-party basis to offer what support we can for the Ukrainian people affected by this senseless invasion.
- 2) To work with the Government on the 'Homes for Ukraine' Scheme to ensure refugees fleeing the atrocities taking place in Ukraine can have a safe haven in Tower Hamlets, such as the council's ongoing work to support a number of Afghan families.
- 3) To challenge anyone who seeks to sow division by making any derogatory or harassing comments towards anyone in the Ukrainian and Russian communities.

(Action by: Mayor's Office)

The meeting ended at 10.15 p.m.