

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 25 MAY 2022

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

Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	Councillor Kabir Hussain
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Councillor Kamrul Hussain
Councillor Leelu Ahmed	Councillor Shubo Hussain
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	Councillor Asma Islam
Councillor Saied Ahmed	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Councillor Ahmodul Kabir
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Ahmodur Khan
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Sabina Khan
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor James King
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Amy Lee
Councillor Maisha Begum	Councillor Abdul Malik
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	Councillor Abdul Mannan
Councillor Rachel Blake	Councillor Ana Miah
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Jahed Choudhury	Councillor Amin Rahman
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	Councillor Rebaka Sultana
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury	Councillor Maium Talukdar
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Bellal Uddin
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	Councillor Abdul Wahid
Mohammed Ahabab Hossain	

Members Present Virtually:

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

The Speaker of the Council, Mohammed Ahabab Hossain in the Chair

With great sadness the Speaker regretted to report that Abdul Gaffar Choudhury, has sadly passed away. He was a Freeman of the Borough in Tower Hamlets and a celebrated writer, political analyst and poet. The Council's thoughts are with his family at this difficult time.

The Council observed a minute silence to remember Gaffar Choudhury

1. ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Speaker of the Council, Mohammed Ahab Hossain addressed the meeting about his time in office.

He thanked the Council, including the former Mayor, John Biggs and Councillors, for giving him this unique opportunity to serve as the First Citizen of the Borough, since September 2020

He noted that, whilst his term began during the height of the pandemic, he had made every effort to carry out his duties in the best way he could, mostly by attending virtual events. During this period, he was particularly proud to have participated in a range of events, aimed at supporting the community at this very difficult time. These included:

- An inter faith event to bring comfort to residents.
- A programme of celebration events to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh, which started on – line.
- Council led events to commemorate all those who had lost their lives during the pandemic and to thank those who had worked tirelessly to support the sick and vulnerable in their communities.

Following the easing of restrictions, he had made a real point of engaging with the community in person to celebrate their achievements. He had tried his best to reach out to as many organisations as he could.

He also stated that he was very proud to have hosted only the second Freedom of the Borough ceremony in the last 20 years, and the first at the Tower of London. The contributions of the five recipients were truly outstanding.

He had also held a very successful Charity Ball in December in Canary Wharf. He thanked all of the people and organisations who supported these events especially the sponsors for each. The final fundraising figure has yet to be confirmed. The money will be donated to the Speaker's chosen charities: Capital Kids Cricket, Patchwork Foundation and Soyttan Sen School of Performing Arts.

He also confirmed that the Council had been finally able to hold the Civic Awards again, to thank those who had worked tirelessly for the community.

Other key highlights of his term included: his visit to Bangladesh, where he had the honour of meeting local dignitaries and attending a range of events.

He had also been very proud to Chair meetings of Full Council.

He concluded by thanking his consort and all the Council Officers that had supported him. He also wished the new Speaker the very best for the year ahead.

Following the Speaker's address, the following Councillors addressed the meeting:

- Councillor Kabir Ahmed
- Councillor Sabina Akhtar
- Councillor Peter Golds
- Councillor Maium Talukdar
- Councillor Ohid Ahmed
- Councillor Sirajul Islam
- Councillor Ayas Miah

The Councillors acknowledged that the Speaker had taken on the role at a difficult time. However, he had shown great leadership and had been an excellent role model for the community. He had also been approachable to all.

They also welcomed that he had worked so tirelessly to reach out to all sections of the community. He had shown great support to many community organisations and good causes particularly during the pandemic. The Speaker had achieved so much and had raised a significant amount of money for charity.

The Councillors thanked the Speaker for all his good work and his service to the Borough during his term. They wished him well for the future.

The Speaker then called for nominations to serve as Speaker of the Council for the coming year.

The following nominations were proposed:

It was **moved** by Councillor Maium Talukdar and **seconded** by Councillor Kabir Ahmed that Councillor Shafi Ahmed be elected to serve as Speaker of the Council until May 2023

It was **moved** by Councillor Sirajul Islam and **seconded** by Councillor Sabina Akhtar that Councillor Amina Ali be elected to serve as Speaker of the Council until May 2023.

The nomination to elect Councillor Shafi Ahmed to serve as Speaker of the Council as the first nomination received was put to the vote and was **agreed** on a majority vote.

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Shafi Ahmed be elected to serve as Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council Meeting in May 2023.

Councillor Maium Talukdar and Councillor Kabir Ahmed then came forward to witness the Speaker of the Council signing the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.30pm and reconvened at 7.35pm.

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Shafi Ahmed in the Chair

The incoming Speaker, Councillor Shafi Ahmed thanked the Council for electing him as Speaker, especially since he was a relatively new Councillor. He congratulated the outgoing speaker on a successful term in office and welcomed all new members, returning Members and the new Mayor on their election victories.

To support the Speaker in his role, he would be accompanied by his consorts:

- Abdul Alim and
- Saadiyah Ahmed.

He noted that these were difficult times. Therefore, it was important that the Council and the Borough worked together to continue to provide opportunities for everyone and promote an inclusive society. In view of this, he expressed a commitment in the year ahead to encourage community engagement and build respect and harmony across age and cultural divides.

Finally, the Speaker reported that he intended to support one charity dedicated to helping children with autism in the Borough. He would confirm at the next Council meeting his chosen charity.

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker sought nominations to serve as Deputy Speaker of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year.

The following nominations were proposed:

It was **moved** by Councillor Maium Talukdar and **seconded** by Councillor Kabir Ahmed that Councillor Harun Miah be elected to serve as the Deputy Speaker of the Council for 2022/23.

It was **moved** by Councillor Amina Ali and **seconded** by Councillor Sabina Akhtar that Councillor Rebaka Sultana be elected to serve as Speaker of the Council of the Council for 2022/23.

The nomination to elect Councillor Harun Miah to serve as Speaker of the Council as the first nomination received was put to the vote and was **agreed** on a majority vote

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Harun Miah be elected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council meeting in May 2023.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Faroque Ahmed

4. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

5. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on 16th March 2022 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 Chief Executive addressed the meeting.

He congratulated the Speaker on his appointment and the Mayor and Councillors on their election victories. The Council looked forward to working with them. He also advised of his plans to provide a report to the General Purposes Committee regarding the conduct of the election. His initial view was that the arrangements had worked well. He thanked everyone who had worked on the election, particularly the Elections Services Team.

Regarding staffing matters, Vicky Clark, (Director of Integrated Growth & Development) would be leaving the Council in June 2022. In addition, Judith St. John, (Director of Commissioning and Culture) was also due to leave in July 2022, after over 35 years of service. They were both thanked for their hard work and dedication, while with the Council

Turning to awards, the Council had been nominated for a number of awards. These were: from the Municipal Journal, the Local Authority of the year award and four Local Government Chronical awards. These were in the following categories: Public Health, large team of the year (for growth and economic development), digital impact and the most improved Council. The winners would be announced in June and July 2022.

7. MAYOR'S CABINET AND EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, (circulated in a supplementary agenda) setting out the Mayor's Cabinet appointments and other arrangements in respect of Executive Decision Making.

The recommendation was **agreed**.

RESOLVED

1. That the Mayor's Executive Scheme of Delegation be noted

8. GROUP ARRANGEMENTS, PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES ON COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2022/23

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, proposing the establishment of the Council's committees for 2022/23 and setting out the review of proportionality and the allocation of places on those Committees.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

RESOLVED:

1. That the review of proportionality as at section 3 of the report and the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub – Committees for the Municipal Year 2022/23 as set out at paragraph 3.12 be agreed;
2. That the Committees set out for the municipal year 2022/23 be established and places be allocated on those Committees, as set out at paragraph 3.12 of the report.
3. Note the update on general group arrangements.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2022-23

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and 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 circulated in a supplementary agenda.

Following the receipt of competing nominations for Chairs of several Committees and for Committee places, the nominations were put to a vote. This was in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.8.

The following Councillors were elected to these positions:

Committee	Committee Chair
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Development Committee	Councillor Abdul Wahid
Strategic Development Committee	Councillor Amin Rahman
General Purposes Committee	Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled
Audit Committee	Councillor Abdul Malik
Pensions Committee	Councillor Bellal Uddin
Licensing Committee	Councillor Kamrul Hussain

Committee	Committee Place (s)
Pensions Board	Councillor Abdul Mannan
Adoption and Fostering Panel	Councillor Bodrul Choudhury Councillor Iqbal Hossain
Local Government Group Annual Conference	Councillor Maium Talukdar Councillor Kabir Ahmed Councillor Abdul Malik Councillor Abdul Mannan

The recommendations subject to the above appointments, were **agreed**.

RESOLVED

1. The members and substitute members to the committees and sub - committees of the Council and other bodies for the municipal year 2022/23 be appointed as set out in the list of tabled nominations, published in the supplementary agenda.
2. That the Chairs of Committees for 2022/23 be appointed from amongst the list of tabled nominations subject to the following:

Committee	Committee Chair
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Development Committee	Councillor Abdul Wahid
Strategic Development Committee	Councillor Amin Rahman

General Purposes Committee	Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled
Audit Committee	Councillor Abdul Malik
Pensions Committee	Councillor Bellal Uddin
Licensing Committee	Councillor Kamrul Hussain

Committee	Committee Place (s)
Pensions Board	Councillor Abdul Mannan
Adoption and Fostering Panel	Councillor Bodrul Choudhury Councillor Iqbal Hossain
Local Government Group Annual Conference	Councillor Maium Talukdar Councillor Kabir Ahmed Councillor Abdul Malik Councillor Abdul Mannan

3. 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 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 2022-23

The Council considered the report setting out a revised calendar of meetings for the Council, Committees and other meetings for the municipal year 2022/23.

Members were also asked to note the following changes:

- 13th July Council meeting moved to Wednesday 27 July 2022.
- 25th July Overview and Scrutiny Committee moved to Thursday 28 July 2022.
- 27th July Cabinet moved to Monday 1 August 2022.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed amended calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2022/23 be approved as set out in Appendix A of the report, subject to the following changes to dates:
- 13th July Council meeting moved to Wednesday 27 July 2022.
 - 25th July Overview and Scrutiny Committee moved to Thursday 28 July 2022.

- 27th July Cabinet moved to Monday 1 August 2022.
- 2. That the Monitoring Officer be delegated 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 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.

11. APPOINTMENT OF POLITICAL ADVISORS

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, regarding the appointment of political advisors.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

RESOLVED

1. Agree to re-establish for the duration of the current administration, posts of political assistants (known as Political Advisors) to those political groups that qualify for such a post in accordance with section 9 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
2. To appoint 1 FTE to the Aspire Group and 1 FTE to the Labour Group.
3. Agree that the relevant staffing budget be adjusted as necessary to cover the costs associated with the above posts

12. COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION 2022-23

The Council considered the report of the General Purposes Committee, setting out the Council's Constitution including the new Member Code of Conduct.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

RESOLVED

1. Note the work of the General Purposes Committee throughout the year to support the Constitution.
2. Agree to confirm the re-adoption of the Council's Constitution as set out at Appendices 1-4 to the report.

13. LOCALISM ACT 2011 - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

The Council considered the report of the General Purposes Committee setting out the pay policy statement for 2022/23.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

RESOLVED

1. To adopt the 2022/23 pay policy statement.
2. To delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support, Chair of the GP Committee and Monitoring Officer, any minor changes to the 2022/23 pay policy statement.

14. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURES 2021/22

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, setting out when Special Urgency provisions have been applied to Executive Key Decisions.

The recommendation was **agreed**.

RESOLVED:

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

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Speaker of the Council