

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 1 AUGUST 2022

**C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present in Person:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	
Councillor Maium Talukdar	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor))
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding)
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Safer Communities)
Councillor Saied Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living)
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	(Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	(Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth)
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	(Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation)
Councillor Kabir Hussain	(Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency)

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Councillor Peter Golds

Other Councillors In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Sirajul Islam

Others in Attendance Virtually:

Fran Pearson	Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board
Mike Hamer	Acting BCU Commander

Officers Present in Person:

Stephen Bramah	(Corporate Head of Strategy and Improvement)
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Sam Harney	(Mayor's Political Advisor)
Amy Jackson	Head of Mayor's Office - Strategy and Performance
Katie O'Driscoll	(Director of Adult Social Care)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)

Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Nisar Visram	(Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit)
Joel West	(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Jennifer Peters	(Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place)
Sharon Godman	(Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Steven Heywood	(Planning Officer, Plan Making Team)
Marc Acton-Filion	(Planning Officer (Plan Making Team))
Peter Maskell	(Interim Head of Procurement)
Steve Nyakatawa	(Director of Education)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of

- Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community for whom Katie O'Driscoll, Director, Adult Social Care was deputising
- Kevin Bartle Interim Corporate Director – Resources for whom Nisar Visram, Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit was deputising.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 11 July be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The meeting was informed that

- Full Council had on 27 July voted to appoint an independent diagnostic consultant to assist the Council with investigations into various financial queries and accounting errors that had contributed to outstanding audit certificates and delayed external audits. The Mayor had instructed officers to prepare a paper with a timetable for delivery of this work by 16 August 2022.
- The Mayor would shortly be launching his emergency energy fund. The fund would create ringfenced funding of over £800,000 for those hit hardest by the increases in the energy price cap including the elderly, the poorest and most vulnerable residents. The Mayor had instructed officers to prepare a paper with further detail and proposals within the next week.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

There were no Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions. However, Councillor Musthak Ahmed, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) provided Cabinet with an update on his Committee's recent activities, including.

- The Committee's draft work programme for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and its three sub-committees had been considered. This followed an OSC awayday in July to develop the work programmes. The final programme will be signed off at the OSC meeting in September.
- The Committee had reviewed the Strategic Plan 2022/26 and had raised a number of points. The Committee is keen to be included in discussions on target setting.
- The Committee usually reviews the quarterly performance report and was disappointed this did not come to its most recent meeting.

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

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Strategic Plan 2022-26 and Year 1 Delivery Plan- adoption

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, introduced the report which explained how the Mayor's vision and the administration's manifesto was to be translated into a high level policy framework which would also demonstrate how they would be delivered alongside the council's statutory duties. Councillor Ahmed summarised the eight priorities of the Plan; explained that the Plan is aligned with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and that the Mayor would approve a one-year delivery plan for each of the four years covered by the Plan.

Cabinet discussed the report and heard submissions from Councillors. They noted a number of points including:

- Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure - the focus on boosting local business was welcome. It was important such efforts also included self-employed residents such as taxi drivers.
- Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime – this was especially important given that statistics suggest LBTH levels of some crime and ASB categories are amongst the highest in London.
- Priority 2: Homes for the future – the focus on tackling the housing crisis was welcome. The Council would be supported in its efforts by partners.

The Mayor welcomed the report, thanked officers and lead members for their

hard work and expressed a desire that the plan would ensure a high performing Council over the next four years. The Mayor **agreed** the recommendation as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the Tower Hamlets Council Strategic Plan for 2022 - 2026 (Appendix 1 to the report), and annual delivery plan for 2022/23 (Appendix 2 to the report).
2. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in the plan and paragraph 4 of the report.
3. To delegate to the Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation in consultation with the Mayor and Chief Executive the development of indicators to monitor the impact of the annual delivery plan.

6.2 Leisure Recommissioning

The Mayor noted and agreed the reasons for urgency as set out in the report.

Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation, introduced the report which set out for the Mayor and Cabinet the different options for running the Leisure Service in the future to inform a decision on which model should be taken forward. Councillor Hossain summarised each of the four main options set out in the report and explained that, despite the officer recommendation to use an outsourced delivery model, he believed the option to bring the service in-house would offer better control over services and would improve service delivery overall.

Officers drew the Mayor and Cabinet's attention to the advice contained in the report regarding the risks associated with each of the options and the need for an additional consultation process to be completed for the insourcing, trust and LA trading company options.

Cabinet discussed the report. They noted a number of points. With regards to the proposal to develop the insourcing option, the Cabinet indicated that this option could deliver a better quality service; could help to provide local jobs; and would secure greater Council control over its state of the art leisure centres in the Borough. The Cabinet noted there were risks associated with the insourcing model and indicated hard work would be necessary to mitigate them,

The Mayor welcomed the report and thanked officers and the lead member for their hard work. He indicated that he understood the risks of the insourcing option, but felt it was incumbent on the Mayor to take difficult decisions. He noted the report submitted explained his prerogative to diverge from officer recommendations. The Mayor indicated he was minded to progress the insourcing option as experience of outsourcing of services at LBTH had shown it can sometimes lead to a detriment to service provision. He felt that

under the current provider cleanliness and maintenance had sometimes fallen below acceptable standards, there had been a lack of women-only spaces and activities had not been conveniently scheduled.

The Mayor explained he believed there were benefits to insourcing which make it an attractive option beyond a financial or VFM analysis. They included

- greater control over affordability of leisure provision for residents;
- increased flexibility for the Council over service provision;
- clearer accountability for service provision for residents.

The Mayor noted that the success of the future leisure service would require prudence and the exercise of strong financial management. The recommendations were **amended and agreed**.

RESOLVED:

1. Further to consideration of the options contained in the report, to agree that the insourcing option be progressed by officers.
2. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment set out in Paragraph 4.1 of the report.

6.3 St George's Leisure Centre Investment Update

Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation, introduced the report which sought the Mayor's confirmation of the decision to invest in the St George's site to provide improved leisure facilities for residents in the south-west of the borough and approval to provide additional housing alongside a new leisure centre.

Officers asked the Mayor to note that the delivery of housing on the site would require re-prioritisation of some existing commitments in the capital programme.

Cabinet discussed the report and heard submissions from Councillors. They welcomed the proposals which they felt would help to tackle the housing crisis and address childhood obesity.

The Mayor welcomed the report and thanked officers and the lead member for their hard work. He welcomed feedback from friends' groups, but indicated he felt best value would be obtained through redevelopment of the site. The delivery of 27 new homes would be a welcome step to addressing overcrowding in the borough. He **agreed** the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To confirm the building of a new leisure centre on the St George's Leisure Centre site, not a refurbishment. Given that the original funding allocation of £25.163m is not sufficient, a decision on how the shortfall will be funded will be made following a review of the overall capital

programme. The totality of the required funding will need to be identified and approved before the procurement phase of the scheme can commence.

2. To confirm that officers should review the current housing programme to ensure that a housing scheme on the St George's Leisure Centre site is part of that programme, based on a funding requirement of up to £16m.

6.4 Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021-22

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care, introduced the report which presented the Board's annual report setting out progress, achievements and learning over the previous year and priorities for the year ahead. Councillor Choudhury introduced Fran Pearson, Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board, who provided further detail on the Board's work over the past year. Fran gave thanks to partners and colleagues for their work. Fran outlined some of the key future priorities for the Board including addressing self-neglect; learning disabilities; and housing support for residents with complex and substance misuse needs.

Cabinet discussed the report including the role and engagement housing providers play in the Board's work.

The Mayor welcomed the report, thanked Fran, officers, partners and lead members for their hard work and **agreed** the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021-22.

6.5 Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021/22

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the report which presented the annual report setting out the Board's effectiveness of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in its locality.

Officers explained the role of the Board and the three statutory partners and summarised the key achievements over the past year. Officers further explained that the Board always seek to put children's voices at the heart of all it does. Areas for further work include strengthening the consistency of multi-agency work into neglect; information sharing, engagement of fathers and a common understanding of thresholds. The Board had recently agreed appointment of a new independent scrutineer, and three young scrutineers who would provide young persons' perspective on the priorities of domestic abuse, exploitation and online safety.

The Mayor welcomed Mike Hamer, Acting Borough Commander. Mike explained that the Police currently lead on work into online safety and

explained key strands of that activity and how parents and carers feed into this work.

The Mayor welcomed the report, thanked Mike, officers, partners and the lead member for their hard work. The Mayor indicated he would welcome a meeting with the new Borough Commander. He **agreed** the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the work that has been carried out by the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children's Partnership over the year 2021-22 and the outcomes that members would like to see from the THSCP over the next year.
2. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

6.6 SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2021

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the report which provided an overview of the progress and impact of SEND improvement work during this period; how the council and partners have been working together to deliver on the priorities set out in the SEND Strategy (2020-24) and SEND Improvement Plan, as well as progressing work to address the four areas of significant weakness identified in the inspection carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2021. Councillor Talukdar explained that the report is organised around the five priorities of the SEND Strategy (2020-24), with details of 'You Said We Did' actions featured for each.

The Mayor welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of a vigilant approach to all services for young people, especially given the recent CQC and Ofsted findings as referenced in the report. He reported specific concerns raised by residents regarding reduced provision for autistic children. The Mayor asked officers to produce a paper explaining how SEND support provision had been changed in recent years, with a view to informing growth bids, as necessary, in the next budget preparation cycle. He **agreed** the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED

1. To note the contents of the SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2021/22.

6.7 Report on outcome of the stage one consultation on the proposal to change the designation of George Green School Specialist Provision and increase Pupil Numbers

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the report which proposed

that the Council move to the publication of a statutory notice in respect of the proposal to redesignate the resource base provision at George Green's School, from physical Disabilities to Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and to increase the number of places within the provision from 15 to 20.

The Mayor welcomed the report and the increase in provision the proposal would create. He **agreed** the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To move to the publication of a Statutory Notice for 28 days, in respect of the proposal to alter George Green's School with effect from 1st January 2023.
2. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment set out in Section 4 of the report and attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

6.8 Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan – Examiner's Report and Referendum

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report which explained the background to the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan, which the Council was now required to make a decision as to whether it met the basic conditions and legal requirements. Officers' view was that the Council agree with the recommendation that the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions subject to modifications being made and should therefore progress to referendum. Councillor Ahmed explained how the statutory basis of the planning system meant the Council had limited influence for some decisions. He explained that a referendum will follow for eligible voters should the Mayor agree the proposal.

Cabinet discussed the report. It noted that, whilst transfer of community assets was referred to in the Plan, this is not something the neighbourhood forum nor the Council are actively working towards at the current time.

The Mayor thanked officers and the lead member for their hard work. He **agreed** the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To note Appendix 1 of the report: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan Final Report of Examination and Appendix 3 of the report: Referendum Version of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the Examiner's recommendation that the plan meets the basic conditions subject to modifications being made, can therefore proceed to referendum, and that the referendum area should be the same as the designated neighbourhood area.
2. To agree that Appendix 3 of the report: Referendum Version of the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum, with a referendum

area that is the same as the designated neighbourhood area, in accordance with Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. To note that under the Planning Policy Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning, the neighbourhood plan will have significant weight in the planning decision-making process for the designated neighbourhood area until the referendum can be held; and if the plan is successful at referendum it will have full weight in the planning decision-making process.
4. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Section 8 of the report.

6.9 Making of Article 4 direction for the removal of permitted development rights for the change of use from E-class uses to residential (C3)

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report which proposed that the Mayor make a direction to remove permitted development rights that would otherwise allow certain buildings with commercial uses to change to residential use without going through the full planning process.

Officers explained that there was an ongoing discussion with the secretary of state which could result in minor changes to the boundaries. The Mayor, lead member and Cabinet would be updated on these discussions.

The Mayor thanked officers and the lead member for their hard work. He particularly welcomed the greater degree of Council influence this direction would create over the built environment. He **agreed** the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To confirm the Article 4 direction made on 18th August 2021 which removes permitted development rights from Class E uses to residential (C3) within the areas shown on the map attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
2. Note that if confirmed, the Article 4 Direction will come into effect on 18th August 2022.
3. Note the Equalities Impact Assessment checklist attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

6.10 Contracts Forward Plan 2022/23 - Quarter 1

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, introduced the report which set out a forward plan of supply and service contracts over £1m in value, or capital works contracts over £5m to be awarded in quarter one of the current financial year.

The Mayor thanked officers and the lead member for their hard work. He **agreed** the recommendation in the report.

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. To authorise the Director Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts referred to at (2) above.
4. To note the procurement forward plan 2022-2027 schedule detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

7.1 Annual strategic delivery and performance reporting – 2021/22

The Mayor introduced the report which provided an update on the council's strategic performance indicator set underpinning the Strategic Plan to 2021-22.

Officers explained that the report related to the previous administration and provided a brief summary of the performance outturn. Targets for the new Strategic Plan (agreed under Item 6.1) would be developed.

The Mayor **agreed** the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the performance against the strategic performance indicator set for 2021-22;
2. To note that this is the final report for the four-year delivery cycle from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

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 7.20 p.m.

Mayor Lutfur Rahman