

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET**

**HELD AT 5.35 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2023**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL**

**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 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 Nathalie Bienfait  
Councillor Peter Golds

**Other Councillors In Attendance Virtually:**

Councillor Sabina Akhtar

**Others Present in Person:**

Ann Otesanya THH - Director of Neighbourhoods

**Others In Attendance Virtually:**

Tracy Smith CEO Tower Hamlets Education Partnership

**Officers Present in Person:**

Karen Swift	(Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration)
Nisar Visram	(Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit)
Rupert Brandon	Interim Head of Housing Supply
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Stephen Halsey	(Interim Chief Executive)
Nicola Klinger	(Housing Companies Manager)
Steve Nyakatawa	(Director of Education)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)

Warwick Tomsett  
James Walsh

Joint Director, Integrated Commissioning  
(Housing Regeneration Officer, Major Project  
Development, Development & Renewal)  
(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

Joel West

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

### *Apologies for absence were received from:*

- Councillor Suluk Ahmed
- Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place (Karen Swift, Director of Housing was deputising)
- Caroline Holland, Corporate Director Resources (Nisar Visram, Director Finance Procurement and Audit was deputising)

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

## 3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

### RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 25 January 2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of proceedings.

## 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor made announcements on the following matters:

- The recent Martyrs Day at Altab Ali Park. The Mayor offered his thanks to all involved in organising and managing the event.
- The upcoming Cleaner and Greener Future event. The Mayor hoped this would provide an opportunity for the Council and partners to consolidate the good work in reducing carbon emissions.
- The imminent closure of Mulberry Place reception and launch of the Residents Hub at the new Town Hall planned for Monday 27 February.

## 5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### 5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

There were no Pre-decision Scrutiny Questions.

Councillor Musthak Ahmed, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided an overview of recent scrutiny activity. He began by expressing his gratitude to the Borough Commander for attending the recent meeting and answering questions in detail. He informed the Mayor and Cabinet that the Committee had heard from young people, gaining insight into their lived experiences and their views on policing in the borough, including on stop and

search procedures; how stronger partnerships between the police and youth workers would improve trust with the police; and the issue of mental health in policing and crime.

The Scrutiny Committee had heard from the Borough Commander on the issue of race and stop and search. It was acknowledged that whilst stop and search is an effective tool to tackle crime, it needed to be used carefully to ensure it led to better outcomes and is used at the right times. The Committee heard about plans to work with the Council and other partners to encourage young people into Policing as a profession. The Committee had questioned the reduction in the Safer Neighbourhood teams, and the impact this is having on perceptions of safety and the nighttime economy.

The Committee also queried how the Police are engaging at a localised level to develop the relationship with residents and build trust with the community and what the Police are doing to address violence against women and girls. The Committee had requested further information on prosecution rates and would be carrying out a separate review of women's safety in the public realm and domestic violence.

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

Nil items.

## **6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **6.1 Homecare for Adults- recommissioning of services**

Warwick Tomsett, Joint Director of Integrated Commissioning introduced the report that presented revised arrangements for the homecare commissioning, procurement, and contracting, and sought permission to restart the recommissioning and tender process, leading to the award of new homecare contracts for adults in 2023.

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care) provided additional context to explain how the proposals would help the borough's most vulnerable residents and support carers.

In response to questions from Cabinet members, Warwick provided more information on the monitoring arrangements and systems.

Cabinet members noted the proposals and welcomed in particular:

- The pragmatic approach to reducing the percentage of staff on zero-hour contracts.
- How the proposals would give new and small and medium sized providers a chance to participate in either commissioned or purchased services.
- How the proposals would increase the number of providers to ensure there is enough competition and that good suppliers are secured.

The Mayor welcomed the report and offered his thanks to officers and members for the work that had gone into the report and echoed the importance of providing the best possible service to the most vulnerable people in the community. He focussed on the need to ensure value for money and to support the workforce, whilst ensuring a high quality provision of service. He also welcomed the focus on providing training opportunities for or carers.

**RESOLVED** that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the impact of the proposed changes as set out in this report.
2. Agrees to the recommended solution/s and proposed model of care as set out in this report.
3. Authorises the Corporate Director Health Adults and Communities to restart the recommissioning and tender process, with the award of new homecare contracts in accordance with the published evaluation criteria and in consultation with the Mayor.

## **6.2 Annual Schools Report 2021-2022**

Councillor Mohammed Maium Miah Talukdar, Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the report that provided an overview of the 2022 education results from Early Years to Key Stage 5 at Local Authority level. Councillor Talukdar explained how he and the Mayor were working with officers to make further improvements, especially for Key Stage 5.

James Thomas, Corporate Director Children and Culture and Steve Nyakatawa, Director of Education, added further detail. James and Steve noted that there was lots to celebrate whilst areas for improvement had been identified. They noted performance against national and neighbouring authorities is good. However, more work needs to be done in order to remain at the top. They also explained that results for Key Stages 4 and 5 had been released the previous day and would help identify direction for improvements.

At the invitation of the Mayor, Tracy Smith, Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) addressed the meeting. Tracy explained how THEP provides support and assistance to schools that are not meeting targets. In response to questions from Cabinet members, Tracy provided more information about the attainment levels of maths in Tower Hamlets schools and provided further details on some of the help improvement packages and monitoring arrangements offered by the partnership.

The Mayor welcomed the report and stressed his belief that education is the foundation of a community and it is a key measure of progress in society. Despite the importance placed on education by successive governments there was still a concerning inequality in education opportunities and attainment nationally. He noted that KS5 results were not as good as expected and explained how his ambitions for educational investment would help to secure improvements, including:

- Investing in free school meals;
- Investing in school-building for the future;
- Refurbishing existing schools;
- Learning from best practices of schools that are performing well; and
- Improving schools that are not performing well

The Mayor asked that an independent expert be commissioned to look specifically at KS5, the remit for which should include exploring how LBTH could retain students in Tower Hamlets. He asked that this commissioning include the Cabinet Member and himself. He also indicated he did not accept the DfE advice, as set out in the report, that data for previous years results should not be compared.

The recommendations were amended and then agreed.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the recommendations contained within the report for measures to further improve the performance of Tower Hamlets schools, subject to:
  - a. Exploration of alternative independent advisors to assist the Council with its ambition to review A Level and sixth form provision, involving the Mayor and Lead Member.
  - b. Not accepting the DFE recommendation regarding comparable data. Mayor and Cabinet wish to receive this data to enable comparison and learning.
2. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment / specific equalities considerations as set out in section 9 of the report.

### **6.3 Future of Housing Management Services – Strategic Review and Consultation**

Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding) introduced the report that set out the results of the consultation on the proposal to bring housing management services back in-house, under the direct control of the Council. Councillor Ahmed explained that the proposal represented an opportunity to create more joined-up services; to increase accountability to residents and the housing regulator; and to realise the Council's strategic approach to deliver more good quality new homes.

Councillor Ahmed welcomed the response rate of over 3,000 responses, which he indicated compared favourably to consultations ran under previous administrations, and the overwhelming support shown for the proposal to in-source at over 86 per cent in favour.

Karen Swift, Director of Housing and Nicola Klinger, Housing Companies Manager, provided further detail of the proposal and the consultation exercise. Karen and Nicola explained that whilst the consultation response was good,

the Council would be seeking to learn from other authorities how to best increase engagement. Officers would also be reviewing around 1400 qualitative comments to better understand residents feeling.

At the invitation of the Mayor, Ann Otesanya, Chief Executive THH, addressed the meeting. Ann stressed how THH officers want to work with the Mayor to make the transition as smooth and swift as possible.

The Mayor welcomed the report and offered his thanks all residents who participated in the consultation. He also thanked Ann and Council and Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) officers for their performance and passion in delivering housing services to residents, but he felt there was room for improvement and he hoped this proposal would deliver that.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the results of the consultation on the future of services for people living in council homes, as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report.
2. To authorise the transfer of housing management services back in-house for the reasons set out in the report and authorise the relevant Corporate Directors following consultation with the Mayor to undertake the following:
  - i. Serving notice to terminate the Management Agreement with Tower Hamlets Homes.
  - ii. Approval of organisational structures including amending or adding structures to accommodate staff and services transferring into the Council.
  - iii. Staff consultation and administration of the transfer of staff under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations.
  - iv. Transfer of budgets and financial processes.
  - v. Resolution of contract novation and other legal issues.
  - vi. Establishment of new governance arrangements.
  - vii. Co-production of a tenants and leaseholders' engagement strategy.
  - viii. Such other actions as are reasonably incidental and necessary to allow for the Council's Housing Management function to be delivered "in house" such as the appointment of consultants and other resources to support the move back in house.

#### **6.4 Harriott, Apsley, Pattison (HAP) Houses Regeneration Scheme Update**

Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding) introduced the report that presented the delivery options for the Harriott, Apsley & Pattison House (HAP) Regeneration Scheme and recommended the scheme be progressed under a development partnership agreement. Councillor Ahmed summarised several alternative delivery models and why they had not been recommended.

Karen Swift, Director of Housing, Rupert Brandon, Head of Housing Supply and James Walsh, Regeneration and new build coordinator, provided further

detail. They explained how the current delivery model had been assessed as the most attractive option, which would be further developed before a report on the tender process would come back to Cabinet in 2024.

In response to questions from Cabinet members, Karen, Rupert and James provided more information on

- The different tenure and unit mix proposed.
- How the Council has engaged with residents on the estates and how it would support tenants and leaseholders in the transition.
- The decanting process and options for affected residents to secure properties in the new development. It was noted properties would be allocated based on housing need.
- Options for lower income residents to attain homes. It was noted that high service charges on private developments sometimes made it difficult for residents to afford shared ownership. LBTH service charges are lower, which is expected to make them more affordable for residents in the scheme.

The Mayor welcomed the report, in particular the engagement with and support from affected residents, the proposal to apply 10 per cent social value weighting and how the scheme would deliver more large family homes. In addition, he asked that officers seek provision for

- an increase the supply of social rented homes to 50 per cent or above; and
- a standalone community centre/mosque.

The Mayor asked for a separate note to explain actions being taken to address these requests.

The recommendations were amended and then approved.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the use of a development partnership approach for delivering the HAP Regeneration Scheme, subject to:
  - a. Requesting officers explore options to increase the social housing element to 50% or higher.
2. To note the indicative programme in the report for procuring a developer partner
3. To Note the expected commencement of the scheme's buy-back programme in February/March 2023 and issuing of an initial demolition notice to suspend the right to buy, approval for both elements was granted by Cabinet in Dec 2021.

#### **7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

**8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

No resolution to exclude press and public was passed as it was not required.

**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 7.10 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman  
Cabinet