

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 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 Amina Ali
- Councillor Maisha Begum
- Councillor Ahmodul Kabir
- Councillor Ayas Miah
- Councillor Bellal Uddin

Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Sabina Khan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillors Nathalie Bienfait, Asma Islam, Shubo Hussain, Rachel Blake and Marc Francis declared non-disclosable non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 10.1 'Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan – Post-Referendum Adoption', as they lived within the area covered by the Plan.

Councillors Rachel Blake and Marc Francis declared non-disclosable non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 10.1 'Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan – Post-Referendum Adoption', as Councillor Blake's brother and Councillor Francis' brother-in-law was a member of the Roman Road neighbourhood forum.

Councillors Rachel Blake and Marc Francis declared non-disclosable non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 8 'Opposition Motion Debate' as their children attended Chisenhale Primary School.

3. MINUTES

DECISION

That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on Wednesday 5 October 2022 be approved and signed by the Speaker as a correct record of proceedings, subject to the following amendment:

- Item 8 'Opposition Motion for Debate' to amend the third bullet point under 'The Council Resolves to' to 'To continue providing support for

small and medium enterprises, including the recently announced £2million dividend for Tower Hamlets' SMEs in the Mayor's Covid Additional Relief Fund, benefiting 850 businesses across the Borough.'

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

See the minutes.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition regarding Road Closures

The petition was deferred to a future Council meeting.

5.2 Petition regarding improved street cleaning

Shaheda Najmeen, Saiful Rahman, Yusra Muhammad and Idris Chowdhury addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency 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)

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Lutfur Rahman presented his verbal report to Council.

The Opposition Group Leader, Councillor Sirajul Islam then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Mayor Rahman provided concluding remarks.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

Councillor Maium Talukdar **moved** and Councillor Musthak Ahmed **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Sabina Akhtar **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded** the following proposed amendment as set out in the supplementary agenda.

Additions underlined

Deletions struck through

This Council notes:

- That education is something that has always been close to the heart of ~~the current Mayor's~~ everyone's vision for Tower Hamlets, since entering public office, and serves as the bedrock for thousands to progress and escape poverty.
- That during his previous term, the current Mayor introduced free school meals for all primary school children from an initiative spearheaded by the Labour Group at the time; introduced the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance; introduced the Mayor's University Bursary; invested millions in extracurricular youth services; and continued and enhanced a community language scheme to promote second language skills across the Borough's communities. Several new schools were also built, including St Paul's Way and Bow School, and countless others were improved as part of the Mayor's £380million Building Schools for the Future programme.
- That Tower Hamlets ~~had~~ has some of the best urban schools in the world due to a strong partnership between school staff, pupils, parents and the Council under the previous Labour administration ~~Mayor's last administration~~, with wholesale refurbishment, expansion and rebuilding taking place.
- ~~That despite this historic investment and prioritisation of education in Tower Hamlets, the previous administration stripped back and reversed several of these initiatives, leaving education services in the Borough under-resourced, lacking in investment and care, and undervalued.~~
- The previous Labour administration oversaw strong investment in schools across Tower Hamlets where the education, development and wellbeing of local children was always Labour's first priority. Under Labour, schools in Tower Hamlets were rated among the best in the country, with 97% of children going to either 'Good' or 'Outstanding' school. This was in large part because of the great work of the school staff and the close partnership between schools and the council. Labour also had a programme called 'Building Schools for the Future' which helped realise the borough's aim of accelerating education across all schools.
- The previous Labour administration also prioritised the health of local children in Tower Hamlets by rolling out the Daily Mile to all schools, an initiative where children run or jog at their own pace for 15 minutes a day to improve the physical and mental health of the schoolchildren. In 2021, the Mayor of London released the latest list of Healthy Schools London award winners which revealed Tower Hamlets to be the most successful borough in London for health and happiness.
- ~~That education in the Borough has not accelerated as it should have over the past seven years. Tower Hamlets is behind Islington, Newham, Southwark, Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Lewisham and Lambeth for the % of students staying in education post-18. This is unacceptable.~~
- That children in Tower Hamlets are so much more than being defined by being sent to either of two universities – Oxbridge and Cambridge – and that

the priority should always be the development and wellbeing of the borough's children so they can all be supported in realising their ambition, no matter what they choose to do. That in Newham alone, one school (NCS) sends more pupils to Oxford and Cambridge than all the Schools in Tower Hamlets combined.

- That many of the Borough's best and most promising students are opting to leave the Borough to improve their life chances. This represents a 'brain drain' of the Borough's brightest and best.

- That, ~~for these reasons,~~ education has always been ~~was once again~~ a central tenet of everyone in the borough. Mayor Lutfur Rahman's transformative Manifesto, ~~which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the people of Tower Hamlets in May of this year.~~

- That the Mayor and his administration have already introduced two key pieces of policy – the reintroduction of the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance, a policy created by a Labour Government and the Mayor's University Bursary – to accelerate education in Tower Hamlets, as approved at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on October 26th, and it is important that the criteria that is set out for the allocation of the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance and the Mayor's University Bursary is conducted in a fair and transparent way and every child that is eligible should receive the funds and no child who is eligible should be excluded from the process.

- That teachers in Tower Hamlets do a great job in supporting local children during these difficult economic times, and deserve more credit for the hard work they do and less divisive rhetoric. That there is a shortage of teachers in positions of leadership from a background that incorporates protected characteristics, and reflects the social and ethnic diversity of Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

- That the students of Tower Hamlets are among the hardest working in the whole country, and deserve as much support as is possible.

- That despite the best efforts of teachers, students, parents and schools in the Borough, Tower Hamlets remains somewhat behind other London Boroughs in terms of performance and top-grade attainment but has continued to improve throughout the last seven years with a key mantra being that a Local Authority with its schools, backed by a range of partners, can dramatically improve the life chances of its children and young people. In 2021 the average attainment 8 score was 53.9 in 2021 as opposed to 49.8 in 2019 (National data, on the other hand, indicates that the average attainment 8 score for England was 53.4 in 2021.

- That the Borough's students deserve to realise their dreams and aspirations by having access to the best educational services and facilities on offer, and the remarkable transformation of attainment and achievement in Tower Hamlets education has shown local children that deprivation is not destiny. In December 2021, seven schools in Tower Hamlets were named in the nation's top 500 schools by Parent Power Schools Guide, published in the Sunday Times.

- That the students of Tower Hamlets need to see teachers in positions of leadership that represents the diversity of the Borough.
- That foundational success alone is not sufficient – education must be accelerated to ensure that Tower Hamlet’s young people can access the country’s top further educational institutions.
- That ~~more~~ continued support is therefore required to ensure that Tower Hamlets students can compete with the best performers, not only in London, but across the UK.
- That this should ~~represent a step change~~ build on the strong work of the previous Labour administration in the leadership and management of the Borough’s educational services.

This Council resolves:

- That the acceleration of educational attainment – from GCSE to University admission – will remain one of the key areas for policy development as part of the Mayor and his administration’s vision for Tower Hamlets.
- That to hasten the delivery of excellent educational facilities and services, a cross-party working group will be set up to the Mayor’s Leadership Team will oversee the development and delivery of a transformation of the Borough’s educational attainment to ensure a fair and transparent process for the benefit of Tower Hamlets schoolchildren.
- To request the Mayor’s Leadership Team work with the cross-party working group on Education to set up a fair and transparent system for the allocation of the Mayor’s Education Maintenance Allowance and University Bursary to ensure that the Mayor and his administration do not handpick recipients, and that all children who are eligible should receive the funds.
- That the Mayor and the Council will establish an Institution of Academic Excellence in Tower Hamlets, to fully support schoolchildren in their education and helping them to realise their ambition in whatever University, apprenticeship or career they wish to progress to, while also noting that no one’s worth is measured by going to a particular elite group of universities. ~~accelerate widespread admission to Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities, while raising all other educational services to this benchmarked standard.~~
- That the Mayor and the Council will promote the employment of Teachers with protected characteristics into positions of leadership.
- That Officers are instructed to begin the planning of a project, with the involvement of the cross-party working group on education, to deliver this Institute for Academic Excellence, with a plan to be presented at the first available Cabinet meeting of the Council.

Following debate, the amendment moved by Councillor Sabina Akhtar was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

The motion as moved by Councillor Maium Talukdar was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes:

- That education is something that has always been close to the heart of the current Mayor's vision for Tower Hamlets, since entering public office, and serves as the bedrock for thousands to progress and escape poverty.
- That during his previous term, the current Mayor introduced free school meals for all primary school children; introduced the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance; introduced the Mayor's University Bursary; invested millions in extracurricular youth services; and continued and enhanced a community language scheme to promote second language skills across the Borough's communities. Several new schools were also built, including St Paul's Way and Bow School, and countless others were improved as part of the Mayor's £380million *Building Schools for the Future* programme.
- That Tower Hamlets had some of the best urban schools in the world under the Mayor's last administration, with wholesale refurbishment, expansion and rebuilding taking place.
- That despite this historic investment and prioritisation of education in Tower Hamlets, the previous administration stripped back and reversed several of these initiatives, leaving education services in the Borough under-resourced, lacking in investment and care, and undervalued.
- That education in the Borough has not accelerated as it should have over the past seven years. Tower Hamlets is behind Islington, Newham, Southwark, Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Lewisham and Lambeth for the % of students staying in education post-18. This is unacceptable.
- That in Newham alone, one school (NCS) sends more pupils to Oxford and Cambridge than all the Schools in Tower Hamlets combined.
- That many of the Borough's best and most promising students are opting to leave the Borough to improve their life chances. This represents a 'brain drain' of the Borough's brightest and best.
- That, for these reasons, education was once again a central tenet of Mayor Lutfur Rahman's transformative *Manifesto*, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the people of Tower Hamlets in May of this year.
- That the Mayor and his administration have already introduced two key pieces of policy – the reintroduction of the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance, and the Mayor's University Bursary – to accelerate education in Tower Hamlets, as approved at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on October 26th.

- That there is a shortage of teachers in positions of leadership from a background that incorporates protected characteristics, and reflects the social and ethnic diversity of Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

- That the students of Tower Hamlets are among the hardest working in the whole country, and deserve as much support as is possible.
- That despite the best efforts of teachers, students, parents and schools in the Borough, Tower Hamlets remains someway behind other London Boroughs in terms of performance and top-grade attainment.
- That the Borough's students deserve to realise their dreams and aspirations by having access to the best educational services and facilities on offer.
- That the students of Tower Hamlets need to see teachers in positions of leadership that represents the diversity of the Borough.
- That foundational success alone is not sufficient – education must be accelerated to ensure that Tower Hamlet's young people can access the country's top further educational institutions.
- That more support is therefore required to ensure that Tower Hamlets students can compete with the best performers, not only in London, but across the UK.
- That this should represent a step change in the leadership and management of the Borough's educational services.

This Council resolves:

- That the acceleration of educational attainment – from GCSE to University admission – will remain one of the key areas for policy development as part of the Mayor and his administration's vision for Tower Hamlets.
- That to hasten the delivery of excellent educational facilities and services, the Mayor's Leadership Team will oversee the development and delivery of a transformation of the Borough's educational attainment.
- That the Mayor and the Council will establish an Institution of Academic Excellence in Tower Hamlets, to accelerate widespread admission to Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities, while raising all other educational services to this benchmarked standard.

- That the Mayor and the Council will promote the employment of Teachers with protected characteristics into positions of leadership.
- That Officers are instructed to begin the planning of a project to deliver this Institute for Academic Excellence, with a plan to be presented at the first available Cabinet meeting of the Council.

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

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

Councillor Asma Begum **moved** and Councillor Amy Lee **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled **seconded** a proposed amendment to the motion as printed in the tabled papers supplement.

Additions underlined

Deletions struck through

This Council notes that:

- Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of motor vehicle traffic in the country, partly due to vehicles travelling through the borough, and the average lung capacity of a child in Tower Hamlets is up to 10 per cent less than the national average. This demonstrates that the imposition of School streets has not directly improved the negative impact of pollution of the children of the Borough.
- The Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027 was presented at a meeting of the Mayor's Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 26th October 2022 which stated in its research that 'studies, including one carried out in Tower Hamlets, show that children's health is being negatively affected living in highly polluted areas. Children in Tower Hamlets have reduced lung function, which they may never recover.'
- The previous Labour administration ~~introduced 26 School Streets across the borough, an initiative to improve air quality for children by reducing car traffic around schools. This policy was largely successful, resulting in a 30% reduction in pollution near schools and there are now 547 School Streets across nearly every London borough.~~ did little to invest in education. They scrapped the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance, and the Mayor's University Bursary, removing the little support that many of the Borough's poorest children had to pursue their academic ambition. This Mayor has reinstated these crucial measures of support.
- In his transformative Manifesto, Mayor Lutfur Rahman, pledged to open the roads and get the Borough moving, removing

restrictions that impacted the poorest and most vulnerable in Tower Hamlets.

- However, this administration has also demonstrated that it is a listening administration, evident in the decision to retain the Wapping Bus Gate. It will also listen – where there is overwhelming support – to calls to retain the school streets infrastructure.
- ~~After a thorough consultation and a local campaign headed by parents, teachers and young people in the area, a School Street was installed at Chisenhale Primary School in order to prevent excess car pollution and keep the local schoolchildren and residents safe.~~
- ~~Despite the scheme having proved successful with large community support, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets has announced that he will remove the School Streets without prior consultation.~~

This Council believes that:

- ~~The local community has made it clear that they want to keep the School Street at Chisenhale Primary School, and their concerns must be heard.~~
- This overwhelming support for the retention of the Chisenhale school street scheme has not been forthcoming, with a well-organised minority pushing their agenda the hardest.
- That large numbers of residents have contacted the Mayor voicing their support for the Scheme's removal, and that therefore it's removal following the lapsing of the Experimental Traffic Order – which Labour Councillors acknowledged was temporary at the time – is more than justified.

This Council therefore resolves:

- ~~To call on the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to immediately reverse the decision to close the School Street at Chisenhale Primary School.~~
- ~~To call on the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to hold a public meeting with parents, local residents, teachers, Ward Councillors and school children about possible alternatives.~~
- ~~To ensure that in future each School Streets scheme is carefully considered on a case-by-case basis and with thorough consultation with the local community before any action is taken which may cause distress to local residents.~~
- To remove the Chisenhale School Street's scheme with immediate effect.
- To assess all other School Street's schemes on a case-by-case basis and – where wanted – to retain them, if this is the wish of the majority of residents and other stakeholders.
- To build upon the productive meeting with the Mayor of London's Office and other London-wide bodies to improve air

quality and educational attainment for all of the Borough's children, not just a select few.

Following debate, the amendment moved by Councillor Kabir Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The motion as amended by Councillor Kabir Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes that:

- Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of motor vehicle traffic in the country, partly due to vehicles travelling through the borough, and the average lung capacity of a child in Tower Hamlets is up to 10 per cent less than the national average. This demonstrates that the imposition of School streets has not directly improved the negative impact of pollution of the children of the Borough.
- The Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027 was presented at a meeting of the Mayor's Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 26th October 2022 which stated in its research that 'studies, including one carried out in Tower Hamlets, show that children's health is being negatively affected living in highly polluted areas. Children in Tower Hamlets have reduced lung function, which they may never recover.'
- The previous Labour administration did little to invest in education. They scrapped the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance, and the Mayor's University Bursary, removing the little support that many of the Borough's poorest children had to pursue their academic ambition. This Mayor has reinstated these crucial measures of support.
- In his transformative Manifesto, Mayor Lutfur Rahman, pledged to open the roads and get the Borough moving, removing restrictions that impacted the poorest and most vulnerable in Tower Hamlets.
- However, this administration has also demonstrated that it is a listening administration, evident in the decision to retain the Wapping Bus Gate. It will also listen – where there is overwhelming support – to calls to retain the school streets infrastructure.

This Council believes that:

- This overwhelming support for the retention of the Chisenhale school street scheme has not been forthcoming, with a well-organised minority pushing their agenda the hardest.
- That large numbers of residents have contacted the Mayor voicing their support for the Scheme's removal, and that therefore it's removal following the lapsing of the Experimental Traffic Order – which Labour Councillors acknowledged was temporary at the time – is more than justified.

This Council therefore resolves:

- To remove the Chisenhale School Street's scheme with immediate effect.
- To assess all other School Street's schemes on a case-by-case basis and – where wanted – to retain them, if this is the wish of the majority of residents and other stakeholders.
- To build upon the productive meeting with the Mayor of London's Office and other London-wide bodies to improve air quality and educational attainment for all of the Borough's children, not just a select few.

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

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

9.1 Report of the Executive: Gambling Policy 2022-2025

The Council considered the report of the Executive setting out a proposed gambling policy for 2022-2025.

DECISION

1. To Approve and adopt the Gambling Policy for 2022-25.

(Action: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place)

9.2 Report of the General Purposes Committee: Recommendations on Implementation of Special Severance Payments Regulations

The Council considered the report of the General Purposes Committee setting out recommendations for implementation of special severance payments.

DECISION

1. To note the revised process for Special Severance Payments.
2. To consider the revised 2022/23 pay policy statement and agree the policy for adoption.
3. To delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support and the Chair of the General Purposes Committee and Monitoring Officer, any further minor changes to the 2022/23 pay policy statement.

(Action: Kevin Bartle, Interim Corporate Director, Resources)

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan – Post-Referendum Adoption.

The Council considered the report relating to Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan.

DECISION

1. To note the result of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan referendum and adopt the neighbourhood plan, in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 38A.

(**Action:** Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place)

10.2 Update of the Protocol for the Identification of Contaminated Land 2022

The Council considered the report relating to the identification of contaminated land.

DECISION

1. To adopt the strategy for the identification of contaminated land.
2. To delegate to the Corporate Director of Place authority to make any amendments to the policy deemed necessary following consultation with the Director of Legal.

(**Action:** Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place)

10.3 Appointment of Co-Optees of the Standards Advisory Committee

The Council considered the report proposing nominations to the Standards Advisory Committee.

DECISION

1. Appoint Elizabeth Marshall and Syed Uddin as Co-opted Members of the Standards Advisory Committee for four-year terms, expiring on 17 November 2026.

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

10.4 Amendments to the Member Allowances Scheme

The Council considered the report relating to the Member Allowances Scheme.

DECISION

1. To Agree the following changes to the Member Allowances Scheme for 2022-23 effective immediately.
 - i. Removal of the Mayoral Advisors Special Responsibility Allowance
 - ii. Clarify that a maximum of one Deputy Mayor Special Responsibility Allowance can be allocated.

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

10.5 Report under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989

The Council considered the urgent report relating to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

DECISION

1. To seek the quashing of the Decision Notice issued on 2nd November 2022, in respect of planning application PA/21/02703.

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

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions were received due to lack of time.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No motions were considered due to lack of time.

The meeting ended at 10.10 p.m.