

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.03 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 2023****COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL****Members Present:**

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

AGENDA ORDER

During the meeting the Council agreed to vary the order of business by taking Agenda Item 12.1 (Motion Reaffirming Fair Trade in Tower Hamlets) before Agenda Item 6 (Mayor's Report) and taking Urgent Motion 15.1 (Rogue Landlord Motion) after Agenda Item 6 (Mayor's Report). For clarity, the minutes are presented in the order the items appeared on the agenda.

SPEAKER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Shafi Ahmed in the Chair:**

The Speaker of the Council provided his update to the Council. He welcomed everyone to our new Town Hall. It was sad to say goodbye to our old Chamber which held many memories, but I look forward to us making new

memories in this Chamber, and upholding the democratic values of Tower Hamlets. The highlights of his activities of the past few months included:

- ❖ The visit of Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla in February. I was honoured to meet them in Altab Ali Park and welcome them to Tower Hamlets. Their visit started in Altab Ali Park where they planted a tree to commemorate the 45th anniversary of Altab's death. I would like to thank the organisers, British Bangladeshi Power & Inspiration, for organising such a wonderful event for Tower Hamlets residents.
- ❖ I returned to Altab Ali Park to mark Martyr's Day otherwise known as International Mother Language Day, where the Mayor and I were joined by Her Excellency Saida un Tasneem, High Commissioner for Bangladesh. The event serves as an important reminder to promote and celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity.
- ❖ February was the Tower Hamlets in Bloom awards which recognises gardening groups, individuals, and organisations for their dedication to making Tower Hamlets a greener borough.
- ❖ On a more sombre note I would like to send deepest condolences on behalf of the whole council to Mizan Ur Rahman's family and friends at this challenging time. This tragic incident has affected many residents. They had a vigil in Altab Ali Park on Sunday and with this in mind I would like to hold a minute's silence in his memory.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Mufeedah Bustin
- Councillor Kamrul Hussain.
- Councillor Amy Lee

It was noted that Councillors Ayas Miah and Abdul Mannan were joining online but would therefore not be able to vote on any matters on the agenda.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

The following Member for transparency declared a potential interest in relation to:

- **In relation to item 7.1** - Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury due to him being a Locum Social Worker for Pertemps Professional Recruitment.
- **In relation to item - 12.1** Councillor Ayas Miah due him being a private landlord.
- **In relation to item - 12.1** Councillor Abdul Mannan due him being a private landlord.
- **In relation to item – 15.1** Councillors Asma Islam, Ayas Miah and Kabir Ahmed declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as they were

landlords with HMO/additional licenses properties. They left the room for the duration of that item.

- **In relation to item – 15.1** Councillors Shafi Ahmed, Maium Talukdar, Abdul Mannan, Harun Miah, Abu Chowdhury, Ana Miah, Bellal Uddin, Suluk Ahmed and Ohid Ahmed declared non-pecuniary interests as landlords of properties in the borough.

3. MINUTES

1. Agreed that the unrestricted minutes of the Council meetings held on 18th January 2023 and 1 March 2023 be approved as a correct record of the proceedings and the Speaker was authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

The Interim Chief Executive, Steve Halsey provided his regular update to the Council meeting, highlighting the following issues:

- ❖ Levels of COVID remain relatively low although it is still estimated at around 1 in 45. COVID has greatest impact on those most vulnerable which is why the Government will be starting the Spring Booster campaign which will be available to over 75s and people with underlying health conditions.
- ❖ Maddock House Fire You will be aware of the unfortunate death of a young man following a fire at Maddocks House. Following discussions with the Executive, an independent criminal investigation will be initiated under the auspicious of the Housing Act.
- ❖ We have been notified today, after much demanding work by staff, of finally receiving the signed certificates by KPMG for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 accounts. This is welcome news and I am meeting with Auditors from Deloitte in the coming weeks to progress the closure of all outstanding accounts.
- ❖ The Tower Hamlets Crime Reduction Team has been shortlisted for an innovation award for the 2023 Local Government Chronicle Awards. Delivering a trauma-informed and culturally competent service to victims of violence and drug related harms is central to their work.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition regarding Recognise Cockney as a community language

Saif Osmani presented a petition asking the Council to ensure that the Cockney language, identity, and its unique cultural heritage related to the East End of London be recognised as a community language and be celebrated annually on 21st February on International Mother Language Day, and for Cockney to be included in any community language provisions by the Council. He then answered questions from Members.

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning responded briefly to the petition. He highlighted how proud the Council was of the rich history of the local community including the Cockney culture and identity.

RESOLVED

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director of Children and Culture for a written response within 28 days.

5.2 Petition regarding Road Safety Measures Urgently Needed on Bow Roundabout connecting the A12, Bow Road and Stratford High Street

Martha Sedgwick and Abdi Mohamed presented a petition asking the Council to engage with Transport for London to urgently implement road safety measures to Bow Roundabout to create a safer environment for pedestrians, including children, parents and carers who use the crossing for school pick up and drop off, and for residents living in the area needing to cross the roundabout for access to transport, shops, places of worship etc. They then answered questions from Members.

Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency responded briefly to the petition. He said that the Council shared the concerns and had asked Transport for London to look into the issue.

RESOLVED

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

5.3 Petition regarding Redevelopment of Chrisp Street Market and Surrounding area

Terry McGreenera presented a petition to ask why Poplar HARCA and Tower Hamlets Council have failed to keep shopkeepers and market traders informed of what has happened since plans were approved for the redevelopment/gentrification of Chrisp Street Market and surrounding area and responded to questions from Members.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding, responded briefly to the petition. He confirmed that the Council was working to ensure the developers kept the community properly informed.

RESOLVED

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

5.4 Petition regarding Fairtrade

Owen Beith and Marie Larvin presented a petition asking the Council to reaffirm and step up its support for Fairtrade in order to address the imbalance of power between the Global North and Global South. They then responded to questions from Members.

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living briefly responded to the petitioners. He welcomed the work of the fair trade movement and highlighted the social value requirements for those seeking council contracts.

RESOLVED

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

Procedural Motion

Councillor Nathalie Bienfait **moved** and Councillor Maium Talukdar **seconded** that under Procedure Rule 12.1 (c) the order of business be changed to take Agenda Item 12.1 'Motion reaffirming fairtrade in Tower Hamlets' as the next item of business. The Speaker accepted their reasons for urgency and put the matter to the vote and it was **agreed**. [Minute of that item presented later in these minutes.]

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Lutfur Rahman presented his report to the Council.

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

Mayor Rahman provided concluding remarks.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Kabir Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Maium Talukdar **seconded** that under Procedure Rule 12.1 (n), Procedure Rule 11.1 be suspended to allow for consideration of an urgent motion on 'rogue landlords'. The Speaker accepted their reasons for urgency and put the proposal to the vote and it was **agreed**. [Minute of that item presented later in these minutes]

Councillor Sabina Akhtar **moved** and Councillor Amina Ali **seconded** that under Procedure Rule 12.1 (n), Procedure Rule 11.1 be suspended to allow for consideration of an urgent motion on 'the refugee crisis'. The Speaker did not accept the reasons for urgency and so the proposal was not put to the vote.

At this point the meeting was adjourned for 45 minutes, reconvening at 9:30pm.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

7.1 ADMINISTRATION MOTION REGARDING MOTION ON DELIVERING SOCIAL CARE FOR ALL

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda on the delivering Of Social Care for all that had been **moved** by Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury and **seconded** by Councillor Maium Miah Talukdar.

Following debate, the motion as moved by Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury was put to the vote and was **agreed** that:

This Council notes:

- ❖ That social care has always been a key priority to Mayor Lutfur Rahman,
- ❖ throughout his time in public office.
- ❖ That understanding the complexities of need, cultural sensitivity and patient priority has been central to all previous policy and legislation historically pursued by the Mayor during his previous administrations.
- ❖ That in his last Market Position Statement on Care, published in 2013, the Mayor pledged to pursue the following key criteria to guarantee and safeguard decency, sensitivity and optimal performance for patients and carers:
 - “All services must be culturally sensitive.
 - “We wish to limit use of block contracts, moving to more flexible contracting arrangements.
 - “We will seek to work with our providers to achieve a balance of value for money and risk that is sustainable for the provider as well as the Council.
 - “We will seek to use our purchasing power to stimulate the local economy and maximise employment opportunities for local people. It is the borough’s highest priority to promote the employment of local residents.
 - “We intend to increase the range of services available, encouraging local, smaller providers.
 - “We would always ask that unless there are good market reasons not to do so, all contractors should pay the London Living Wage. Unless an exception is made contracts will be let with this stipulation.

“We will fund independent support for providers in complex procurements.”

- ❖ That these commitments represented a shift away from the hegemony of three or four large contractors and allowed a democratisation of the market, enabling care. services to be tailored to the diverse needs of patients.
- ❖ That – according to the 2021 Census – Tower Hamlets has 17,471 of residents over 65, and 22,526 residents classified as disabled under the

Disabilities Act. Many of these residents will be require varying levels of care.

- ❖ That Officers have warned that demographic pressures in social care represent nationally ‘a growing concern for local authorities,’ with over 55,000 residents expected to be over 65, suffering from physical and learning disabilities by 2025.

This Council believes:

- ❖ That to address these pressures, a reimagining of and shift in how the Council delivers its care services is required.
- ❖ That this will require a refreshed approach to procurement; how care is administered by providers; new capital projects to meet these pressures; and a return to a democratised market where smaller care providers have the opportunity to deliver bespoke care services to the residents of Tower Hamlets.
- ❖ That smaller providers should be given the opportunity to deliver services to residents, breaking the monopoly of four or five organisations and enhancing the Council’s ability to guarantee tailored, and where necessary, culturally sensitive care to residents.
- ❖ That social value must be a priority in the procurement weighting considered before contracts are awarded and services delivered, ensuring that care is considerate and dignified, as well as cost-effective and efficient.
- ❖ That – building on the Mayor’s previous commitment to guarantee carers the London Living Wage (LLW) – all carers should be now be guaranteed minimum. hours, enhancing their ability to provide the best services to their patients and protecting them against the instability and uncertainty of zero-hour contracts.
- ❖ That carers should be recognised as trustworthy and invaluable key workers who provide the most important services to our residents.

This Council resolves:

- ❖ To support the Mayor and Lead member’s plans to invest in accessible high1quality social care provision in the borough.
- ❖ To support the Mayor and Lead Member’s pledge to develop two bespoke care facilities for adults and children, helping to alleviate the demographic pressures warned against by Officers.
- ❖ To support the Mayor and Lead Member’s plans to guarantee hours for all carers, providing them security and stability while they deliver invaluable services to residents.
- ❖ To support the Mayor and Lead Member’s pledge to request the prioritisation of 10% social value weighting to all contracts procured through the Council’s tendering processes, ensuring that the needs of residents and communities are given fair consideration in the procurement process.
- ❖ To support the Mayor and Lead Member in guaranteeing smaller organisations a chance to provide care to the residents of the Borough.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

(The Opposition Motion was not considered due to lack of time).

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

Nil items

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24

The Council considered the report of the Executive setting out the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24. Following debate, the proposed recommendation was put to the vote and it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Adopt** the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 as set out at Appendix 1 to this 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 3.6 of the report.
3. **Agree** that the General Purposes Committee lead on any required engagement with any London Independent Remuneration Panel, reporting back to Council as required for decision.

10.2 Committee Calendar 2023-24

The Council considered a report proposes a calendar of Council, Committee, and other meetings for the forthcoming municipal year 2023/24. A period of consultation has taken place with Members and officers and Council are now asked to confirm the proposed meeting dates. The calendar of meetings is presented in Appendix 1 to this report. Following debate, the proposed recommendation was put to the vote and was agreed.

RESOLVED to:

1. **Approve** the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2023/24 as set out in **Appendix 1** of the report.
2. **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.

10.3 Agree Exit Payments

The Council considered a report of the Interim Corporate Director, Resources, listing potential exit payments were the overall package is likely to exceed £99,999.

It was noted that this unrestricted report relates to an exempt/confidential report at agenda **item 14.1**. Following debate, the proposed recommendation was put to the vote and it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Note** and **approve** the exit payments, including redundancy and the cost of the early payment of pension benefits, resulting from the deletion of the posts following the restructure of the service; and
2. **Note** that the redundancy payment is part of the individuals' contractual terms and conditions of employment and that the early payment of pension benefits is linked to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(No Questions were considered due to lack of time – written responses are attached at Appendix A to these minutes).

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 MOTION REAFFIRMING FAIRTRADE IN TOWER HAMLETS

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda on reaffirming Fairtrade in Tower Hamlets was **moved** by Councillor Abdul Wahid and **seconded** by Councillor Nathalie Bienfait. Following debate, the motion as moved by Councillor Abdul Wahid was put to the vote and was **agreed** that:

This Council notes:

- Next year will be the 30th anniversary of the U.K. launch of the Fairtrade Mark, a labelling scheme administered by the Fairtrade Foundation that identifies products grown and processed to Fairtrade Standards, including sustainable social, economic, and environmental criteria. Many of the organisations involved are cooperatives of small-scale farmers and workers.
- Tower Hamlets Council passed a unanimous resolution on the 1st of March 2006 to actively support and promote Fairtrade. Council acknowledges in particular, the work of the Teams which have supported Tower Hamlets in its Fairtrade journey: Sustainability, Procurement, Contracts and Communication.
- A Tower Hamlets Fairtrade Borough Steering Group was set up, and on 11th January 2007, it was successful in applying for Fairtrade Borough Status, having satisfied Fairtrade criteria including Council support, Council use of Fairtrade products, availability of Fairtrade products in local shops, catering establishments, workplaces, and community organisations, and popular support for Fairtrade campaigning.
- Since 2007, the Council has maintained its support for Fairtrade-related activities, notably through the integration of its support for Fairtrade with its sustainable and ethical procurement policy. Making it a requirement for the supply of bananas and juices to be Fairtrade in the Schools Canteen Contract contributed to Tower Hamlets being awarded the Soil Association Gold Food for Life Award.

- The Tower Hamlets Fairtrade Steering Group has worked with local stores, cinemas, bookshops, cafes and other establishments in Fairtrade-related events and activities. Local residents and workers have contributed to and supported Fairtrade campaigns. This has enabled Tower Hamlets to retain its Fairtrade Borough status since 2007.
- There are now over 600 Fairtrade Communities in the UK and more than 2,000 globally. London is the biggest Fairtrade City in the world and Tower Hamlets contributes to that positive story.
- Tower Hamlets is home to a diversity of communities with many having family, cultural ties, and roots in farming communities in a multitude of countries worldwide. Many have their own experiences to inform their personal support for Fairtrade.
- Efforts to combat injustice and deprivation, fight climate change and improve social and economic conditions in the borough have established a tradition of community support for social justice, economic reform and global solidarity which aligns with the Fairtrade movement.
- The U.K. Fairtrade market is now one of the world's largest. Globally, Fairtrade sales have generated hundreds of millions of pounds in Fairtrade Premiums which have enabled farmers in 73 countries to invest in health, education, and social welfare measures, as well as attempt to mitigate the devastating impact of climate change, increase sustainable production, and bolster global food security.
- Despite this positive news, exploitation remains rampant in global supply chains. More than 40 million people are trapped in modern slavery and 152 million young people in child labour. Hundreds of millions are earning less than a living income or wage. Fairtrade and its supporters in Tower Hamlets have the capacity to influence change in global supply chains, including in the textile industry and garment trade and the cocoa and chocolate sector, as well as in the general areas of child labour and modern slavery.

This Council resolves that:

- Fairtrade and the wider Fair Trade movement has a significant contribution to make towards ending exploitation, mitigating the impact of Climate Change, and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- The recently agreed International Fair Trade Charter should be welcomed, with its vision of transforming trade to work for people and planet.
- The Fairtrade principles of paying minimum prices to protect producers from market volatility, and a 'premium' that is wholly managed by farmers and workers themselves are crucial to systemic change.
- Public bodies, including local authorities, should support ethical procurement policies, using their purchasing power to implement Fairtrade principles and standards and ensure that their supply chains, at home and abroad, are sustainable and free of exploitation, including modern slavery.

- Council suppliers operating through global supply chains should be encouraged to operate sustainably and responsibly. They should ensure that their trading practices uphold human rights and Fairtrade principles such as the payment of living wages and the achievement of living incomes for all.

This Council resolves to:

- Renew its commitment to maintaining 'Fairtrade Borough' status, including serving Fairtrade certified tea and coffee in meetings and ensuring that Fairtrade Mark - certified food and drink options are widely available internally in its canteens and vending machines, including at the new Town Hall in Whitechapel.
- Review its procurement policy, including its catering offer, to ensure that Fairtrade produce is chosen wherever possible, and that Fair Trade considerations are included as a preference in any contracts going out to tender.
- Be recognised by the residents and business community of Tower Hamlets, suppliers, employees, and other local authorities as a borough that actively supports and promotes Fairtrade.
- Continue to work with the Fairtrade Borough Steering Group, by identifying a lead member to support the work going forward, including increasing awareness and availability of Fairtrade products within Tower Hamlets' cafes, shops, schools, universities, faith groups, workplaces, and organisations.

(Motions 12.2 and 12.3 were not considered due to lack of time)

13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

No motion to exclude the press and public was considered.

14. EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

14.1 Agree Exit Payments

This report relates to the item at Agenda Item 10.3 and was considered at that time.

15. URGENT MOTION FOR DEBATE

15.1 ROGUE LANDLORD MOTION

Council considered the following urgent motion for debate tabled at the meeting **moved** by Councillor Saied Ahmed and **seconded** by Councillor Maium Talukdar.

Councillor Marc Francis **moved** and Councillor Rebaka Sultana **seconded** the following proposed amendment that an additional recommendation be added as follows:

- This Council should urgently determine whether the level of resources available to inspect HMOs and other properties in the private rented sector are adequate and to bring back a report on this to Housing Scrutiny and Full Council.

Following debate, the amendment moved by Councillor Marc Francis was put to the vote and was **defeated**. The motion as moved by Councillor Saied Ahmed was then put to the vote and it was and was **agreed** that:

This Council notes:

- The tragic death of Mizanur Rahman in a housefire at 18 Maddocks House, Tarling West Estate, Shadwell, and the serious injuries sustained by several others.
- That the property was licensed as an 'additional House in Multiple Occupation' (HMO) with a declared occupancy of 3 individuals from two households, managed by Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), the Council's Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO).
- That at least 16 people were living in the house, with several bunkbeds in one room, representing a serious breach of the license agreement.
- That many of those in living in the house were low-paid workers.
- That resident complaints had been received as early as September 2021.
- That emergency hotel accommodation has been provided to 17 people along with a weekly allowance and welfare support and housing advice, and that at the request of Mayor Lutfur Rahman, this accommodation will be extended to cover the entire period of Ramadan.
- That while the flat leasehold is owned by a private landlord, the freehold is owned by the council with Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) managing the communal area.
- That in his *Manifesto*, Mayor Lutfur Rahman called for a 'fix [to] the landlord registration scheme to ensure it delivers on its purpose of driving up standards in the private sector, including landlord rent disclosure.'
- That this is also reflected in the Council's *Strategic Action Plan*, which states that the Council will 'work with social and private landlords to encourage them to improve the conditions of the homes they let and the service they provide to their tenants.'
- That the Mayor's Office and Officers have already begun work on how the Council can strengthen Registered Social Landlord (RSL) accountability and the Council's ability to respond to complaints from residents concerning issues regarding over-occupation and license breaches.
- That in October, the Mayor commissioned a consultation to strengthen licensing and regulation of private landlords to safeguard tenants' rights.

That this Council believes:

- This tragedy represents an abuse of the most socially and economically vulnerable residents and workers by a greedy, vulturous, and predatory class of landlord.
- That an investigation should be called to establish the reasons for this incident, and to identify any failures that contributed to it.
- That a full investigation should also be launched.
- That the urgent work already underway concerning the enhanced monitoring and targeting of rogue landlords and the needs of vulnerable residents needs to be accelerated to prevent such tragedies from recurring.

That this Council resolves:

- That all members should support the Mayor's call for an investigation into this incident.
- That the Council should identify where possible any potential failings that contributed to this tragedy.
- That the Council should be fully cooperative with any potential criminal investigation.

The meeting ended at 10.45 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 11: Member Questions and Answers

<p>11.1</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Amin Rahman</p>	<p>Can the lead member update the chamber on progress with the council's accounts? These were left unsigned for the past 6 years under the previous administration.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Both external audit firms KPMG and Deloitte attended Audit Committee in January 2023 to provide an update on progress on the audits of the Council's prior year accounts. KPMG stated that all outstanding issues pertaining to the 2016/17 and 2017/18 audit certificates had been largely resolved with just a couple of items to clarify on the council's Letter or Representations before these are agreed. It is expected that the certificates will soon be issued for both those years. Deloitte issued draft audit opinions for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 accounts at Audit Committee and stated that there were a handful of outstanding items to be resolved before they would be able to sign off the audit. Officers continue to work with Deloitte to progress these issues and a few subsequent new items raised by the auditors since the Audit Committee meeting. Deloitte have also requested an enhanced Letter of Representation for both financial years from the Council, including presenting these to Audit Committee, and the requirements for providing these additional assurances are currently being worked through. Deloitte have confirmed that the audits for 2020/21 and 2021/22 will not commence in earnest until the prior year's accounts are signed.</p>
<p>11.2</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Asma Begum</p>	<p>What are the Mayor and Lead Member's plans in respect of the LIF programme of activities which have been identified for local investment by local residents, particularly on the Isle of Dogs which has undergone significant population increase and is in much need of relevant infrastructure?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The council is currently reviewing how it uses available funding to best deliver infrastructure, housing and other improvements to benefit local people and support delivery of the Strategic Plan. Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) – known locally as the Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF) – is an important part of delivering for local communities and the council are reviewing it to ensure it delivers local priorities.</p> <p>At this stage, a formal decision has not been made on any of the LIF programmes or projects, including those on the Isle of Dogs.</p> <p>If following the wider Capital Programme review, changes are required, a report will need to go through the Council's governance process and be ratified by the Mayor in Cabinet.</p>

<p>11.3</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Musthak Ahmed</p>	<p>Can lead member set out the timetable for Council-wide audit which was agreed at full council last summer?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Following the appointment of the Interim Chief executive on March 1st, 2023, the following progress has been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diagnostic review the Councillor refers to was commissioned by Full Council in July 2022, to address a wide range of challenges and performance issues that had arisen. This was in direct response to the publication of the failings of the Council in the Youth Justice Report published by Her Majesty’s Probationary Service, and the continued failure to deliver the signing off of the Council’s outstanding six years of accounts. • The diagnostic review was called for to ensure that the Council is best placed to identify and address failings such as this, while preparing the foundations for improvement in performance and delivery across the Councils directorates and services. <p>The diagnostic review will comprise a number of elements, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Following several meetings between the Interim CEO and the Local Government Association (LGA), they have confirmed acceptance of an invitation to undertake a Corporate Peer Review. This will address a wide range of issues including governance, arrangements for partnership working, and performance management. The review will commence in July 2023. 2. The LGA have also confirmed acceptance of an invitation from the Interim Chief Executive to undertake a Housing Management Peer Review. It is anticipated that the review will commence in August/September 2023 3. Following on from the Mayor’s calls for improvement in the delivery of waste and cleansing services in the Borough – culminating in the declaration of a Waste Emergency at November Full Council 2022, the LGA have also confirmed acceptance of an invitation to undertake a waste management and cleansing Peer Review. The review will commence in September 2023.
--------------------	--	--

		<p>4. The interim Chief executive and CLT are currently reviewing arrangements to realign the council's infrastructure, structure, and resources to realise the aspirations detailed in the authority's Strategic and Delivery Plans. This will include the undertaking of a comprehensive diagnostic review of the Councils current arrangements to meet the challenges detailed in the recent budget agreed by council on March 1st 2023, and those areas where improvement in performance is necessary.</p> <p>This work has already commenced.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Executive holds regular meetings with the Executive Mayor outlining the progress of these various workstreams, and I look forward to keeping this Chamber informed of all updates and improvements as they are made.</p>
11.4	<p>Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar</p>	<p>I understand Capitol funding has been removed from the Oaklands redevelopment. Can the Lead Member explain his rational for the removal of this vital funding?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Funding for the Oaklands scheme has been paused following a review of the capital programme which seeks to ensure the programme as a whole is reflective of the Mayor's priorities.</p> <p>However there has been agreement to proceed with Health and Safety works to the school playground, with planned delivery scheduled for September 2023. The paused scheme will be subject to regular review in line with available council expenditure and priorities and the school and members will be kept informed as soon as a decision is made on the way forward.</p>
11.5	<p>Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled</p>	<p>Could the lead member provide an update on the ongoing work being undertaken by the Interim CEO as outlined at the Budget Full Council?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The Interim Chief Executive has met with various partners and has initiated discussions with the Borough Commander, agreeing a framework for progressing a wide range of community safety issues, in part considered by a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In the coming weeks meeting will take place with representatives of THCVS, Queen Mary University, the Canary Wharf Group, the East London Business Alliance, the NHS Trust, the Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum, and many others. This will strengthen the Council's relationships with key partners and stakeholders.</p>

		<p>The Interim Chief Executive has also met with representatives from the housing sector and joined the project board progressing the insourcing of THH. The project is progressing well.</p> <p>He has chaired a range of internal meetings, including the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Performance Improvement Board, Corporate Transition Board, SOMS (a meeting of Statutory officers) and the Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Similarly, a meeting was held with representatives from the LGA by the Interim Chief Executive. This served as a precursor to a meeting with the Director General, Local Government, Resilience and Communities at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Catherine Frances.</p> <p>An invitation has also been accepted by the Interim Chief Executive from the Chief Executives of several London local authorities, to meet with them to discuss common challenges and issues.</p> <p>Housing and waste management are two areas that will benefit from agreed Peer reviews by external and experienced local government professionals. Arrangements have also been confirmed for the Corporate Peer Review that will take place in June 2023.</p> <p>Initial meetings have also taken place between the Interim Chief Executive and Corporate Directors, identifying targets moving forward.</p>
<p>11.6</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam</p>	<p>I understand the new Mayor's Office is currently undergoing construction work in our New Town Hall here in Whitechapel which is significantly larger than originally planned.</p> <p>Can the Mayor tell me what is the cost of creating this larger office space?</p> <p>Response</p>

Work is ongoing to complete the new Town Hall, and most staff have now moved into the building.

As part of this work there is naturally an ongoing review about the utilisation of space within the building to best suit our needs.

There have been a number of requests for changes to arrangements and these are under review and currently undergoing feasibility analysis.

Further information/briefing

High-level costings are available for *some* of the changes requested across the building – see table below – of which a budget of £450k has been agreed.

<i>Additional works to NTH</i>	<i>Budget estimates</i>
<i>Mayor's Office to 2nd floor mezzanine</i>	<i>£200k</i>
<i>Additional kitchenette 2nd floor</i>	<i>£25k</i>
<i>New Prayer/ablution space on ground floor</i>	<i>£48k</i>
<i>Replacement Council Chamber Chairs</i>	<i>£ 64k</i>
<i>New meeting room table for Mayor's office & 30 chairs</i>	<i>£ 50k</i>
<i>Power & lighting changes to 2nd floor</i>	<i>£13k</i>
<i>Contingency for design and estimates</i>	<i>£50k</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>£450,000</i>

Of this budget, the cost to date spent is £64k on the new Council Chamber chairs and £24k on the Mayor's meeting room chairs.

		<p><i>The budget remaining is therefore £362,000, however there has been a further round of change requests that will impact the above, and these are under review and undergoing feasibility analysis. The full extent of works and cost have not yet been determined.</i></p>
<p>11.7</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Bellal Uddin</p>	<p>The Mayor pledged to address the shortage of affordable housing in the borough. Can the Mayor or lead member set out his delivery plan with numbers?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The three-year HRA new homes programme for 2023-2026 has an approved budget of £464.084m for schemes at various stages within the development process which will deliver 1,075 new homes (including 235 market homes) and funded by GLA grant, RTB receipts (either directly held or recycled through the GLA), s106 contributions, HRA capital receipts and prudential borrowing.</p> <p>There are currently 375 new council homes currently under construction on 18 council-owned sites, 191 are due to be completed in 2023, with a further 90 to be completed in 2024 and 94 to be completed in 2025. In addition, 9 recently completed 3 and 4 bedroom homes in Royal Mint Street, being purchased from a developer, will be available for letting to families in housing need in mid-2023.</p> <p>Planning consent has been granted for 456 new homes, including 412 homes as part of the HAP estate regeneration. 44 new council homes with planning consent are due to be completed by March 2025. Planning applications have been submitted for 28 new council homes and a further 173 homes are in community engagement stage of design development.</p> <p>A pipeline of potential developments to deliver at least 500 additional homes on council-owned land is being established to enable new schemes to be brought forward once funding has been identified or an alternative delivery route agreed.</p> <p>The supply of genuinely affordable homes in Tower Hamlets is being increased by housing association developments, affordable homes delivered through s106 agreements and other initiatives such as the council's buy-back programme, all of which will contribute to the ambitious target set by the Mayor to deliver 4,000 homes for social rent in the next four years.</p>

<p>11.8</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Amy Lee</p>	<p>Can the Mayor outline how he is holding Homecare providers to account, to ensure they are providing high quality care to vulnerable residents, as well as providing value for money for the council?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>All commissioned homecare providers are closely monitored through both face to face and online contract monitoring meetings. Providers submit monthly contract monitoring data on their performance and quality. In addition, the Commissioning team undertake quarterly monitoring of a random sample of people receiving homecare services to assess their satisfaction with the service. This survey includes questions about how safe and well supported they feel, and any issues identified are addressed. The results show that we have a consistent high level of satisfaction amongst those surveyed and this has exceeded the 70% target for the last three quarters of the current financial year (2022-23). Healthwatch Tower Hamlets also act as an independent check on the quality of homecare provision in the Borough and we regularly engage with them for feedback on health and care services.</p>
<p>11.9</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Wahid Ali</p>	<p>The Mayor of London recently announced universal free school meals for Primary School children across London. Can the lead member tell us when this will be implemented, and how much it could save the council as it already provides this service?</p> <p>Response</p> <p><i>We are proud to say that Tower Hamlets has been providing Universal Free School Meals for all Primary Schools for a considerable number of years since 2014. We will have no work to do to implement this as long-established processes are already in place with all Primary Children currently able to access a daily free school meal.</i></p> <p><i>We have yet to receive the proposed funding from the Mayor of London, however currently the cost to the Council is budgeted at £3m per financial year and we could expect to save up to that sum, over the two financial years that would fall in the Academic year 2023/24. Noting that the commitment from the Mayor of London is for one year only.</i></p>

<p>11.10</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Asma Islam</p>	<p>Demand for housing means private landlords and letting agents are raising rents with impunity, putting people at risk of being priced out of their homes.</p> <p>Can the Lead Member detail what he is doing to protect private renters from these rent increases and help residents stay in their homes?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The council is working with tenants who are unable to afford paying their rents by maximising their incomes (predominantly via benefits which they can claim) to enable them to pay rents, including DHP if eligible.</p> <p>Additional housing options have also included getting tenants into employment to increase incomes.</p> <p>In addition to this, when tenants approach Housing Options where their landlords are requesting rental increases, the service will intervene to negotiate with the landlord and can assist with incentive payments to secure tenancies for a longer period. If these actions do not help to support a family/individual in their privately rented home, the council will work with them to try and secure alternative accommodation in the form of private rented sector or other accommodation.</p> <p>As well as the above, the Housing Options Service work with our partners such as voluntary sector (Law Centres) so they can advise tenants to set up payment plans early on to avoid homelessness.</p>
<p>11.11</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain</p>	<p>Can the lead member provide feedback on the consultation results in relation to Tower Hamlets Homes coming inhouse?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The council conducted a consultation on the future of services for people living in council homes between 24 October and 18 December 2022, delivering on the Mayor’s manifesto commitment.</p>

		<p>There was a high response rate to the survey with 12% of residents of council homes participating.</p> <p>86.21% of those who participated in the survey agreed that housing management services should be brought back in house.</p> <p>1,444 people are interested in being further involved in the future of services.</p> <p>Over 150 people provided qualitative feedback via drop-in sessions, webinars, emails and on paper.</p> <p>People who provided qualitative feedback were generally supportive of the council's proposals and provided comments and suggestions on what is important in services in the future, resident engagement, the transition period and how services are now.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) board members and Tenants and Resident Association (TRA) members also provided feedback, suggestions, and comments in addition to those of residents.</p> <p>Based on the consultation, on 22 February a decision was taken in Cabinet to bring housing management services back in-house.</p> <p>The consultation summary report can be found at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/talkhousing. A full report was appended to the Cabinet report.</p>
<p>11.12</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Marc Francis</p>	<p>Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member set out the actions that have been taken since May 2022 to revitalise Roman Road market and businesses on the high street in Bow?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Since 2019, the High Streets team have worked in collaboration with local traders, businesses, community groups and local residents to develop proposals to improve Globe Town (Roman Road West) high street and Globe Town market square. Activities to date include: shopfront improvement grants, market square refurbishment, mural to celebrate local histories and reopening of a Network Rail viaduct to connect QMUL 15,000 staff and students to Globe Town via Meath Gardens.</p> <p><u>Specific actions since May 2022 include:</u></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April – June 2022: The High Streets Team worked with Highways to reduce the Tender costs for the refurbishment of the market square to ensure best value for money. • October - December 2022: shopfront improvements completed on Roman Road, which supported five high street businesses plus one vacant council unit. The designs were developed in partnership with the businesses and included new shutters, signage, lighting, vinyl and awnings. • October 2022: Site works to the market square commenced. The design incorporates the aspiration of traders, businesses, community groups and local residents, and will deliver: planting of native mature, semi-mature and fruit trees, low level planting, seating, more bike hoops and lighting with traders integrated power supply. Once the works are complete (estimated end of April '23), parking provisions will change and there will be off street parking provided for traders', to enable the public space to be car free. The improvements will make the square more appealing for our local communities to shop, sit, meet and play, whilst also revitalising the market, by attracting a new customer base and new traders to trade on the square. • March 2023: We are working with a local community group on the low level planting design, and are planning to host a planting event to relaunch the market square in Spring 2023. <p>In addition to the above, the following specific activities to support market traders operating on Globe Town Market Sq have been undertaken, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support and enterprise: a successful training programme and traders handbook have been produced. The training was recorded, modules for further training are being created from those recordings. Traders are now able to complete these at their leisure. • Commodities: The market commodity list has been reviewed and updated to make the different clothing lines clearer. • Marketing: a successful project for taking all of our markets online in 2023 has been undertaken, funding is being sought to extend and expand this work. • Operations: Market traders have been enabled to use the Idea Store toilet facilities to improve working conditions on the market. <p>The Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth are currently reviewing options for supporting high streets and retail businesses across the borough (including Roman Road).</p>
--	--	--

<p>11.13</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir</p>	<p>Could the lead member update Council on additional measures the Council has put in place to help residents in the Borough with the Cost-of-Living crisis?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>As a priority both of the mayor’s manifesto and the council’s strategic plan, tackling the cost of living crisis has been a focal point of LBTH’s work supporting low income residents and tackling poverty in the borough. This has meant the delivery of a range of initiatives that were worth more than £6m last year, including a million pounds worth of payments over the summer holidays to low income families, and direct payments to more than 31,500 residents in groups identified as being placed most at risk by the impacts of the crisis.</p> <p>Our work to mitigate the effects of this crisis is ongoing, with our cost of living payment scheme already extended to recipients of housing benefit who have not received other payments on top of our established support for vulnerable residents across all age groups in the borough. In addition we are also rolling out payments to low income residents who have high energy-use medical equipment in their homes so that those who need to use more energy for their health are supported. Coming tranches will provide support for care leavers and young carers, as well as children in households where adults have no recourse to public funds, and families seeking to settle in the borough after claiming refugee status.</p> <p>On top of this, more money will be put into our Resident Support Scheme, which continues to provide a pathway to support for those in financial crisis, or at risk of being in financial crisis.</p> <p>This follows a range of support that has been in place since the start of the Cost of Living crisis. Almost £2 million of funding was provided to households with children who have benefits eligibility for free school meals before the Christmas holidays, as well as generous contributions from staff and a local charity to organisations supporting households with food. We also opened warm hubs in some of our buildings, and continue to deliver these after extending the programme past February.</p> <p>This work continues alongside projects designed to tackle poverty in the medium and the long term – including the FOOD Store programme, the Council’s food hub, the Holiday Activities and Food programme, the income maximisation work of the LBTH outreach team, and the ongoing expansion of universal free school meals to all secondary school aged children.</p>
---------------------	--	--

		<p>In order to help residents to seek help and advice, the cost of living campaign was launched near the end of last year with regular communications to residents about a wide range of support they can access.</p>
<p>11.14</p>	<p>Question from Councillor James King</p>	<p>Can the Mayor provide an update on the actions undertaken as a result of his meeting in November last year with residents of Malting & Brewster Houses regarding the structural works in those blocks?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) attended a meeting on the 3rd November 2022 with the Mayor and residents to address the concerns and questions concerning the structural strengthening project for Brewster and Malting House(s).</p> <p>The Mayor asked THH to respond to the following requests and concerns raised at the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents to be sent itemised invoices by THH • Residents to be given written assurance that they won't pay for CCTV in the period it has been out of operation • Temporary CCTV measures to be put in place as soon as possible • THH to ensure that officers are more responsive and open with residents • THH to provide the mayor with clear, updated information on when the work will be completed <p>Leaseholders' Charges - THH carried out a full evaluation of the charges sent to residents for work completed up to 31st March 2022. A re-evaluation took place which resulted in the service charges being reduced by an average credit of some £16k for the period. Leaseholders received a comprehensive breakdown of the costs and works for the last financial year.</p> <p>CCTV Charges - THH reviewed the cost for CCTV and concierge services in light of concerns that no CCTV has been in place since February 2022. It was proposed to reduce the charge for the concierge service by 10% until the temporary CCTV was installed on January 12th 2023. No charges for specifically CCTV are to be processed for the period of time where there was no CCTV.</p> <p>Communication for Residents - Concerns were raised that there was insufficient site presence and officers were not available to update residents or answer questions on the project. Though there is a dedicated Resident Surgery open every Tuesday for residents' concerns, take up of this facility has been low, with only one or two residents having attended. THH staff are on site throughout the working week, residents have an open office for any questions or concerns.</p>

		<p>Officers are to attend future TRA meetings to update and answer concerns of residents.</p> <p>Project Completion - There have been delays in agreeing specification and obligations to complete the signing of engineering consultant contract and the main contract with principal contractor since May 2022. The contracts have now been signed on the 13th of January 2023 and the steel has been ordered. A revised programme is to be relayed to all stakeholders, subject to confirmation on the lead time for the steel. Once THH confirm revised programme the project was a 2 year project and it is anticipated that the project will be completed April 2025.</p>
11.15	<p>Question from Councillor Abdul Mannan</p>	<p>Can the lead member provide an update of where the Council is with the Liveable Streets consultation?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The council has received thousands of responses to the three consultations which ran earlier this year. Responses have been collated and officers are analysing the significant number of results to inform consultation outcome reports for each consultation, which will form an important part of the decision-making process.</p>
11.16	<p>Question from Councillor Amina Ali</p>	<p>As you will know, it was LGBT+ History Month in February – a time to celebrate the vital contributions the LGBT+ community has had on Tower Hamlets society and to promote equality and diversity for the benefit of the public. Unfortunately, there is the worrying trend of rising hate crime across the borough that we do need to address - what measures is the Lead Member for Community Safety putting in place to ensure the Council protects our LGBT+ LGBT community in Tower Hamlets?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Tackling inequalities, including LGBT+ inequalities and hate crime is a priority within the Councils Strategic Plan and across the Partnership.</p> <p>The Council's dedicated Equalities Team commission the third sector to deliver LGBT + History Month activities through a community network: East London Out Project (ELOP), to engage LGBT+ residents in service design and delivery.</p>

	<p>This Community Network has worked with Positive East to engage the Met Police in responding to the lack of confidence the LGBT+ community has with reporting to the police.</p> <p>A range of information has been provided to the Met Police Service about community needs and to help them map community venues in the borough. This work has included cross border partnerships with other LGBT organisations right across East London.</p> <p>The Network has successfully raised awareness of hate crime and has supported victims of harassment and hate crime - linking people to services.</p> <p>The Network engaged in the Tower Hamlets Peace Walk on Wednesday 12th October which brought together marginalised communities to stand up to all forms of hate crime in the borough to mark National Hate Crime Awareness Week 8 - 15th October 2022.</p> <p>The Council's dedicated Hate Crime Team works in close partnership with the Met Police Service (MPS) to ensure that those who report LGBT + hate are offered support and are referred to specialist LGBT+ support groups.</p> <p>A monthly Hate Incident Panel operates to ensure that robust police action is taken against identified perpetrators and effective support is given to protect and support all victims of hate crime.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets is one of the only boroughs in London that has a dedicated panel to ensure support & protection for victims of hate crime.</p> <p>Concerns relating to an increase in LGBT+ hate crimes can be raised at the Tower Hamlets No Place for Hate Forum. This forum overseen by the Community Safety Partnership works with the LGBT Community Forum and East London Out Project (ELOP) who provide services to LGBT+ Communities.</p> <p>The new Town Hall has been flying the LGBT+ Pride Flag continuously throughout LGBT+ History Month to demonstrate the Council's commitment to ensuring that all communities in the borough feel safe and welcomed.</p>
--	--

		<p>LGBT+ History Month 2023 FEST Event took place with many activities including film screenings, HIV & STI testing, creative activities, stalls and workshops.</p> <p>LGBT+ history month was widely promoted on Bridge, plasma screens and external media platforms (Twitter, Facebook)</p> <p>Note</p> <p><i>Overall hate crime offences reported on a rolling 12 month period showed a decrease by 9.98% (129 reports) compared to the similar period in the previous year.</i></p> <p><i>Transphobic hate reports reduced by 23.33%.</i></p>
<p>11.17</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Harun Main</p>	<p>One of the Mayor's central manifesto pledges was reinvesting in policing and tackling ASB, can he or the lead member provide an update on this?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The Council's budget for 2023/24 includes £4.4m to tackle crime and ASB.</p> <p>This will ensure 22 new police officers and 40 new tower hamlets enforcement officers are recruited.</p> <p>This will significantly enhance the existing uniformed resources within the Borough.</p> <p>Our aim is to provide a better service to residents, improve feelings of safety, improve visibility and deterrence and tackle those committing crimes and ASB in the Borough.</p> <p>This additional resource will improve the effectiveness of the current multi-agency approach that has already contributed to a 45% reduction in ASB this financial year compared to 2021.</p> <p>More offenders will be identified and brought to justice, more victims will be supported and crimes and ASB will be prevented from occurring due</p>

		<p>to the deterrent effect that our uniformed officers will have on potential offenders.</p> <p>We want this visible presence within the community to tackle and deter ASB and crime, but also to increase residents' satisfaction in the police and the community safety partnership's response to their concerns.</p> <p>This investment in tackling crime will contribute to the achievement of the Mayor's ambition to be out of the top 10 high crime boroughs in London.</p>
11.18	<p>Question from Councillor Rebekah Sultana</p>	<p>I understand that LIF funding is being dropped from vital redevelopment projects, including Frank Dobson Square in my ward. Can the Mayor outline how his administration will be improving Frank Dobson Square now that they have removed the plans put in place by the previous Labour administration?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The council is currently reviewing how it uses available funding to best deliver infrastructure, housing and other improvements to benefit local people and support delivery of the Strategic Plan. Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) - known locally as the Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF) – is an important part of delivering for local communities and the council are reviewing it to ensure it delivers local priorities.</p> <p>At this stage, a formal decision has not been made on any of the LIF programmes or projects, including Frank Dobson Square. If following the wider Capital Programme review, changes are required, a report will need to go through the Council's governance process and be ratified by the Mayor in Cabinet.</p>
11.19	<p>Question from Councillor Ana Miah</p>	<p>Can the lead member explain what Mayor Rahman's Administration is doing to ensure Tower Hamlets becomes a greener Borough?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>On Thursday 24th Feb an event was organised to launch Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change as part of vision for cleaner, greener Tower Hamlets. A pamphlet was also produced and distributed</p>

		<p>at the event which outlined the vision for Cleaner Greener future for Tower Hamlets which can be found on the website.</p> <p>https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Climate/CleanerGreener-Leaflet-Accessible.pdf.</p> <p>The Advisory Board for Climate Change will work closely with the Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan which aims to achieve net zero carbon across the borough by 2045.</p> <p>Alongside this Advisory Board, plans for a cleaner borough and keeping the borough moving were also announced.</p>
11.20	<p>Question from Councillor Sabina Khan</p>	<p>Our residents have been concerned about the lack of progress on bulk waste collection across the borough. Can the Lead Member provide an update on when our residents will see any improvement on this important issue?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>We increased the number of vehicles collecting bulky waste from three to five following budget growth for 2022/23. 3 vehicles are integrated via Whitespace with “jobs” being booked through online forms via firm step. The other two have work manually allocated by the manager responsible.</p> <p>Regarding the councillor’s own ward, we are also making changes to recycling collections in the Bow/Mile End area as part of our ongoing efforts to improve services across the borough. We are adjusting collection days and instituting a more robust monitoring system for rounds that we have concerns with. Managers are also working closely with crews to support them to fulfil their duties in this area.</p>
11.21	<p>Question from Councillor Leelu Ahmed</p>	<p>The previous Labour administration did a lot of vital and good work to address fire safety across the borough for the protection of our residents.</p> <p>Can the Lead Member detail how the administration is building on this good work?</p> <p>Response</p>

		<p>We are delivering a range of actions in this area which will be enhanced due to additional funding from the government to increase our enforcement activities and support staffing resources in this area.</p> <p>Additional technical staff are being recruited now.</p> <p>The website is regularly reviewed and we continue to deal with queries from leaseholders.</p> <p>A new IT system to improve data collection, management, and monitoring to go live at the end June 2023.</p> <p>We continue to work strategically with DLUHC, LFB and GLA to agree and collaborate efforts to make sure dangerous cladding is removed. We hold monthly meetings.</p> <p>We have used our enforcement powers under the Housing Act 2004 and have issued 3 Improvement Notices and 3 notices are drafted and will be issued.</p>
<p>11.22</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Nathalie Bienfait</p>	<p>Rising sea levels present a flood risk to Tower Hamlets and the rest of London. What is the administration doing to start to plan to mitigate the risk of flooding for the areas of the borough most at risk?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Large parts of Tower Hamlets, including the Isle of Dogs and Lower Lea Valley, are in medium to high risk flood areas (zones 2 and 3a).</p> <p>The Council has key role as a local planning authority to ensure that new development does not increase the risk of flooding and must provide mitigation measures to reduce their impact on flood risk, including enabling the repair and further delivery of flood defences.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Local Plan has policies to ensure that development is appropriately located and designed, taking account of the nature of the proposed land use and the level of flood risk.</p>

		<p>Most planning applications for major development require a flood risk assessment to be included and for statutory consultation to take place with the Environment Agency.</p> <p><i>The Council carried out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in 2017</i></p> <p><u>London Borough of Tower Hamlets SFRA FINAL.pdf</u> (towerhamlets.gov.uk) which informs the policies in the 2020 adopted Local Plan and other strategic documents including the Surface Water Management Plan, Local Flood Risk management Strategy and guidance for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. The council is currently reviewing its Local Plan and alongside that, new and updated evidence (including a SFRA) will inform emerging policies. The work has been commissioned in partnership with the Council's flooding team.</p>
<p>11.23</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Peter Golds</p>	<p>With the pausing of the redevelopment of George Green's School on the Isle of Dogs, will the Mayor do his utmost to ensure that Northern and Shell sign the agreement to permit the development of the Westferry School site which has planning consent.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Planning permission was granted in May 2016 for the redevelopment of the former Westferry Print Works site, for a mix of housing, retail, commercial and community space and public open space. The planning permission and legal agreement secured part of the site for the future development of a secondary school.</p> <p>It is understood that the site owners, Northern and Shell, are in the process of concluding an agreement to lease the school site land to the government Department for Education (DfE).</p>

This page is intentionally left blank