

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 17 MAY 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Member)	Councillor Kabir Hussain (Member)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kamrul 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 Amy Lee (Member)
Councillor Maisha Begum (Member)	Councillor Abdul Malik (Member)
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait (Member)	Councillor Abdul Mannan (Member)
Councillor Rachel Blake (Member)	Councillor Ana Miah (Member)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin (Member)	Councillor Ayas Miah (Member)
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Harun Miah (Member)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Amin Rahman (Member)
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Rebaka Sultana (Member)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Maium Talukdar (Member)
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Bellal Uddin (Member)
Councillor Marc Francis (Member)	Councillor Abdal Ullah (Member)
Councillor Peter Golds (Member)	Councillor Abdul Wahid (Member)
Councillor Iqbal Hossain (Member)	

1. ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Shafi Ahmed addressed the meeting about his time in office.

He thanked the Council, the Mayor, and elected Members for giving him the opportunity to serve as First Citizen of the Borough since May 2022.

He noted that he had made every effort to carry out his duties in a fair and impartial way, shining a light on the borough by bringing positivity and enthusiasm to the role.

His chosen charity for which he had fundraised for, was the Tower Project, which provides support to families with autistic children. He said the charity dinner event held in December 2022 had raised almost £20,000, despite this being a scaled-back event owing to the cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Ahmed said he was honoured to serve as Speaker which was a once in a lifetime opportunity. He said of the many occasions and events he had attended the most memorable ones were:

- The late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, which was followed a few months later with the sad news of Her Majesty passing away.
- The proclamation of the new King.
- The new King and Queen's visit to the Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Attending the Coronation Garden Tea Party; and
- Taking part in Citizenship ceremonies welcoming new citizens to the borough.

He said the Civic Awards held at the beginning of May 2023 were a resounding success and reminded everyone that nominations of next year's awards would open later in the year. He said he was privileged to be the last Speaker of the old Town Hall as well as the new Speaker of the Whitechapel Town Hall, especially as a local resident and Whitechapel ward councillor.

He thanked his Consorts for their support before expressing his condolences to the family of Suma Begum who had been tragically murdered.

He also thanked the Democratic Services Team for their unequivocal support and said he looked forward to serving his constituents and spending more time with his family.

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

- Councillor Maium Talukdar
- Councillor Kabir Ahmed
- Councillor Sirajul Islam
- Councillor Bodrul Choudhury
- Councillor Abdal Ullah
- Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury
- Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain
- Councillor Iqbal Hossain
- Councillor Ayas Miah
- Councillor Abdul Wahid
- Councillor Mufeedah Bustin
- Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled

- Councillor Peter Golds
- Councillor Amin Rahman
- Councillor Harun Miah
- Councillor Suluk Ahmed
- Councillor Kabir Hussain
- Councillor Kamrul Hussain
- Councillor Abdul Mannan
- Councillor Ohid Ahmed
- Councillor Musthak Ahmed and
- Mayor Lutfur Rahman

The Councillors praised Councillor Shafi Ahmed for his great personality, showmanship, and magnanimous attitude in overseeing Council meetings and for being an excellent role model for the community. They were in awe of his charitable work and the significant amount of money he had raised for charity.

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

ELECTION OF NEW SPEAKER

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

The following nomination was proposed:

It was **moved** by Councillor Maium Talukdar and **seconded** by Councillor Kabir Ahmed that Councillor Jahed Choudhury be elected to serve as Speaker of the Council until May 2024.

The nomination to elect Councillor Jahed Choudhury to serve as Speaker of the Council was put to the vote and was **agreed** on a majority vote.

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Jahed Choudhury be elected to serve as Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council Meeting in May 2024.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 19:49 and reconvened at 20:04.

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Jahed Choudhury in the Chair

The incoming Speaker, Councillor Jahed Choudhury thanked the Council for electing him as Speaker and congratulated the outgoing speaker on a

successful term in office. He said he had been a fair and effective speaker. He thanked the Mayor and fellow councillors for electing him for the year ahead.

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

- Miss Maria Sultana Choudhury.
- Mr Asfar Uddin; and
- Mr Abdul Alim

The new speaker noted the residents of the borough were facing a difficult time, with the cost-of-living crisis and said it was more important than ever to work together to ensure residents were supported by creating opportunities for them through education and employment.

He expressed his sadness for hate crime perpetrated against three residents of the borough and said he wanted to ensure Tower Hamlets was a safe place for all to live, work and travel. He said he looked forward to working with everyone by fostering a positive attitude and collaborating for the good of the residents.

The Speaker of the Council expressed his condolences at the passing of Ms Jackie Odunoye, former director of housing who had passed away a few days before. He said that Ms Odunoye has worked for Tower Hamlets for many years before moving to Redbridge Council. She was a popular and well-respected officer. He asked that Council observe a minutes' silence in her honour.

The following Councillors also expressed their condolences especially as they had the good fortune of working with Ms Odunoye:

- Councillor Rachel Blake
- Councillor Ohid Ahmed
- Councillor Marc Frances
- Councillor Sirajul Islam; and
- Mayor Lutfur Rahman.

Finally, the Speaker stated his chosen charities were Eden Care UK and St Joseph's Hospice. He explained both charities worked to provide compassionate care and support for people living with life limiting illnesses.

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

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

The following nominations were proposed:

It was **moved** by Councillor Maium Talukdar and **seconded** by Councillor Kabir Ahmed that Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled be elected to serve as the Deputy Speaker of the Council for 2023/24.

It was **moved** by Councillor Sabina Akhtar and **seconded** by Councillor Asma Islam that Councillor Rebaka Sultana be elected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the Council for 2023/24.

The nomination to elect Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled to serve as Deputy Speaker of the Council as the first nomination received was put to the vote and was agreed on a majority vote.

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled be elected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council meeting in May 2024.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Faroque Ahmed was unable to join the meeting in person but joined remotely. It was noted that he would be unable to vote as he was not formally in attendance.

4. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on 15th March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record save to record that Councillor Nathalie Bienfait was in attendance for the meeting.
2. Upon the amendment being noted, the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

There were no announcements from the Speaker or Interim Chief Executive to note.

7. MAYOR'S CABINET AND EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

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

The recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED

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

8. PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES ON COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2023/24

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, proposing the establishment of the Council's committees for 2023/24 and setting out the review of proportionality and the allocation of places on those Committees.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

RESOLVED:

1. Agree the review of proportionality as at Section 3 of this report and the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub-Committees for the municipal year 2023/24 as set out at Paragraph 3.7.
2. Agree to establish the Committees set out for the municipal year 2023/24, and for places to be allocated on those Committees, as set out at Paragraph 3.7.
3. As part of Recommendation 2 above, to confirm the establishment of a new Human Resources Committee with Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and with a new Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of £6,526.
4. To also agree subsequent changes to the General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 2 to the report to reflect the handover of responsibilities to the Human Resources Committee.
5. Note that consequential changes to the Constitution will be required and are noted as part of the Constitution report at Agenda Item 11.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2023-24

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, regarding the appointment of members to the Council's Committees,

and Chairs where appropriate, (including those established under item 8 above). The list of nominations were circulated in a supplementary agenda however some verbal nominations were also received during the meeting and these were decided by Council.

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

Committee	Committee Chair
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Mushtak Ahmed
Audit Committee	Councillor Harun Miah
General Purposes Committee	Councillor Shafi Ahmed

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

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

RESOLVED

1. Appoint members and substitute members to the committees and sub-committees of the Council and other bodies (including Outside Bodies) for the municipal year 2023/24 as set out at Appendix 1 attached or any further nominations made at the meeting.
2. Appoint the Chairs of Committees for 2023/24 from amongst the nominations listed at Appendix 2 attached or any further nominations made at the meeting.
3. Agree that in relation to any unfilled places within the seats allocated to a particular political group, the Council note that the Director of Legal, as Monitoring Officer has delegated authority subsequently to agree the appointments to those places in accordance with nominations from the relevant political group.

10. COMMITTEE CALENDAR 2023-24

The Council considered the report setting out the calendar of meetings for the Council, Committees and other meetings for the municipal year 2023/24. In addition it was noted that the first meeting of the Human Resources Committee was scheduled for 8 June and not 25 May.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 subject to the above amendment.
2. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that Members agree to set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.

11. COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION 2023-24

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

The recommendations were **agreed**:

RESOLVED

1. Note the work of the General Purposes Committee throughout the year to support the Constitution.
2. Agree the addition of an amended Paragraph 11.2 of the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Paragraph 3.6 below.
3. Agree that subsequent to this meeting to further amend the Constitution with consequent factual changes required due to the establishment of the Human Resources Committee to be added after this meeting and reported to the General Purposes Committee for noting.
4. Agree to confirm the re-adoption of the Council's Constitution as set out at Appendices 1-4 to the report subject to the above amendments.

12. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURES 2022/23

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

The recommendation was **agreed**.

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

The meeting ended at 9.55 p.m.

Speaker of the Council