

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.32 P.M. ON MONDAY, 11 JULY 2022

**COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present in Person:

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

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Councillor Peter Golds
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Other Councillors In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Sirajul Islam

Officers Present in Person:

Dr Somen Banerjee	(Director of Public Health)
Kevin Bartle	(Interim Corporate Director, Resources & Section 151 Officer)
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Amy Jackson	Head of Mayor's Office - Strategy and Performance
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Dominic Hinde	(Tackling Poverty Team, Leader)
Yasmin Ali	(Development Project Manager, Place)
Elizabeth Asante-Twumasi	(Political Advisor to the Aspire Group)
Sam Harney	(Mayor's Political Advisor)

Matthew Mannion

(Head of Democratic Services)

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Afazul Hoque

(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)

Nisar Visram

(Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Denise Radley (Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community) for whom Somen Banerjee (Director of Public Health) was deputising.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 9 March be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The meeting was informed that an Individual Mayoral Decision was due to be signed and published shortly which would set out appointments to Outside Bodies.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions**

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

He highlighted a number of areas including:

- OSC had agreed to establish three sub-committees in relation to Health & Adults, Housing & Regeneration and Children & Education. Scrutiny Leads had also been appointed.
- The Committee had considered two reports on the Council's financial position and he thanked the Mayor and Lead Member for Resources and the Cost of Living for attending the discussion.
- The Committee would continue to monitor the Council's financial performance and was also planning its approach to scrutinising the Council's budget later in the year.

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

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Supporting residents through the cost of living crisis

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, introduced the report setting out some initial mitigation measures to support local residents through the cost of living crisis.

He highlighted that the cost of living crisis is a key priority for the Mayor and so this package of measure had been developed urgently following the appointment of the new Administration. The proposals resulted in £1.75 million of new expenditure which, along with the Household Support Grant, brought total funding to over £2.6 million.

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

- Many local residents were really struggling with inflation often being higher for staple needs than the headlines suggested.
- There were a number of different schemes targeted at different types/groups of residents.
- It was important to make sure that all funding provided by the government was spent in full.
- That some funding still needed to be allocated including for pensioners and single member households.
- The needs of residents with disabilities were being considered both in terms of funding and also in how they access funds.

The Mayor welcomed the report, thanked officers and Lead Members for their hard work in putting the report together in such a short space of time and he **agreed** the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED

1. To agree that the recommended measures set out in the report to support residents through the cost of living crisis be implemented.
2. To agree the additional funding required to undertake the measures.
3. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Place to enter into any contracts that are required in order to deliver the measures.
4. To agree that a contract should be entered into with the Post Office as the primary means of distributing funds to residents.

6.2 MTFs and Budget Scene Setting 2023-26

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, introduced the report setting out the Medium Term Financial Strategy and set the scene for the budget process for 2023.

In particular he highlighted the uncertainty caused by the short term settlements currently being provided by the government which made planning the Council's budget and financial strategy very challenging.

The Mayor thanked the Lead Member, the Corporate Director of Resources and his officers for the work they had undertaken. He asked Cabinet to note that where the report noted future savings that had been agreed by the previous administration he would be reviewing the proposals and finally he **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the current General Fund Revenue Funding Requirement of **£421.500m** for 2023-24 prior to the budget setting review to be carried out in year.
2. To note the budget gap assuming a 0% council tax increase compared to the normally permitted 1.99% and the implications on Adult Social Care funding if the Council was not able to levy the assumed 1% Adult Social Care Precept.
3. To note the latest draft position of the Council's reserves, subject to sign off of the statements of accounts.
4. To note that currently £1m funding from the Public Health grant is allocated to the Key Stage Two extension of Free School Meals as well as £2m from the Free School Meals Reserve.
5. To note that any increase in the Social Care Grant for 2023-24 is assumed to be allocated in full to the services (75% to adult social care and 25% to children's social care).
6. To note that the HRA housing rent and service charge increases will require consideration once the September 2022 CPI inflationary figure is known.
7. To note that the 2022-23 Management Fee payable to Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) was increased from £33.236m to £33.676m following addition of the 2021-22 pay award.
8. To note that under the Management Agreement between the Council and THH, THH manages delegated HRA income and expenditure budgets on behalf of the Council. In 2022-23, THH is managing delegated income

budgets totalling £98.842m and delegated expenditure budgets totalling £32.128m.

9. To note the current assumption that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme will remain unchanged for 2023-24.

10. To note the Equalities Implications as set out in Section 4 of the report.

6.3 Budget Monitoring Report 2021-22 Period 12 Provisional Outturn

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, introduced the report setting out the Council's budget monitoring report for 2021-22.

He highlighted the small underspend set out in the report but he also highlighted a number of risks including the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as service pressures in areas such as adults and children's social care. Finally he noted that £1.3million of unachievable savings had been identified which would need to be managed.

The Mayor noted the report and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the Council's provisional outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget, Housing Revenue Account and earmarked reserves for 2021-22, based on forecasts as at 31st March 2022;
2. To note the reserves position of the Council is uncertain pending the closure of the statement of accounts for the period 2016 – 2021;
3. To note the progress made against the 2021-22 savings targets, based on forecasts as at 31st March 2022;
4. To note the Council's projected outturn position against General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programme approved budgets, based on forecasts as at 31st March 2022 and approve the net slippage of 2021-22 budgets to periods 2022-23 to 2024-25;
5. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4.

6.4 Decisions taken by the Chief Executive under urgency procedures

The Mayor introduced the report setting out an urgent decision the Chief Executive had taken just before the recent local elections. The Mayor agreed the recommendation set out in the report and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the decision made by the Chief Executive under the Constitutional provision on emergency or extreme urgency as set out in the attached appendix.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Nil items.

9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business

Nil items.

10.2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil items.

11. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nil items.

12. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 6.18 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman
Cabinet