

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS****RECORD OF THE DECISIONS OF THE CABINET****HELD AT 5.40 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2023****COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL****Members Present in Person:**

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	
Councillor Maium Talukdar	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor))
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding)
Councillor 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 Safer Communities)
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	(Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation)
Councillor Kabir Hussain	(Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency)
Councillor Abdul Wahid	(Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth)

**Other Councillors Present in Person:**

Councillor Nathalie Bienfait

**Officers Present in Person:**

Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive)
Warwick Tomsett	Joint Director, Integrated Commissioning
Simon Baxter	(Interim Director Public Realm)
Catherine Boyd	Interim Head of Arts, Parks and Events
Michael Darby	(Head of Parking & Mobility Services)
Kelly Duggan	HOS Youth Justice & Young People's Service • LBTH - Childrens Services
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Lisa Fraser	(Director of Education)
Ben Gladstone	(Deputy Director of Commissioning of Older People)
Sam Harney	(Mayor's Political Advisor)
Abidah Kamali	Policy Officer Housing
Julie Lorraine	(Corporate Director Resources)
Paul Patterson	(Interim Corporate Director Housing And Regeneration)
Leah Sykes	(Head of Customer Services)
Joel West	(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))
Susannah Beasley-Murray	(Divisional Director of Supporting Families)

Kathy Constantinou

Superintendent Registrar/Head of Registration and  
Citizenship Service

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

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

There were none.

**3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 25 October 2023 were approved as a correct record.

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

None.

**5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

See the minutes.

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

None.

**6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**6.1 Single Homeless Hostels – Contracts**

The pre-decision scrutiny questions were noted.

**DECISION**

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Health and Adult Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive to extend the five hostel contracts referenced below until 30 November 2024 to allow Officers to review and competitively tender the services. The hostels are:

- Founders House
- Riverside Complex
- Daniel Gilbert House
- Edward Gibbons House
- Providence House

2. Following the review of the services, authorise the Corporate Director Health and Adults Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive following consultation with the Mayor to award new hostels contracts in accordance with the tender results as determined by the application of the published evaluation criteria.

**Action by:**

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (D. RADLEY)**

Ben Gladstone, Deputy Director

**Reasons for the decision**

To respond to the need to ensure that any new service model for five hostels is in line with the priorities of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that is currently in development and aligns with the other hostel provision in the Borough to improve outcomes for residents, maximise use and value for money. In addition, to start the recommissioning and tender process, leading to the award of new hostels contracts in 2024.

**Alternative options**

The only other option would be to decommission the services; however, this would have an adverse impact on vulnerable service users with physical, mental health and substance misuse issues. Furthermore, due to the significant needs of many of the service users without the hostel provision they may require greater assistance through one of the Council's statutory services such as requiring temporary accommodation through Housing which would be significantly more costly.

## **6.2 Tower Hamlets Young People's Supported Housing Pathway contract extensions**

The pre-decision scrutiny questions were noted.

**DECISION**

1. Approve the direct contract award request for the Tower Hamlets Young People's Supported Housing Pathway (YPSHP) for six months from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2023 to 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2024 with a value of £675,892.43.
2. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1 of the report.

**Action by:**

**ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES (L. FRASER)**

Acting Director Commissioning and Youth (L Richards)

**Reasons for the decision**

To ensure the Tower Hamlets Young People's Supported Housing pathway contracts are extended in line with the procurement timeline and start of new contract.

To ensure continued and high-quality services for our most vulnerable children and young people.

**Alternative options**

To not put direct contract awards in place. This option is not recommended as these are statutory services that the council must provide for our vulnerable children and young people.

**6.3 Tower Hamlets Young People's Advocacy Service contract extensions**

**DECISION**

1. Approve the direct contract award request for the Tower Hamlets Young People's Advocacy service for six months from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2024 to 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2024 with a value of £55,572.
2. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1 of the report.

**Action by:**

**ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES (L. FRASER)**

Acting Director Commissioning and Youth (L Richards)

**Reasons for the decision**

To ensure the Tower Hamlets Young People's Advocacy Service contract is extended in line with the transformative recommission timeline and start of the new Advocacy and Independent Visitors contract.

To ensure continued and high-quality service for our most vulnerable children and young people.

**Alternative options**

To not put a direct contract award in place. This option is not recommended as the Advocacy service is a statutory service that the Council must provide for our vulnerable children and young people.

**6.4 Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028: A Tower Hamlets for All**

**DECISION**

1. Agree the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028.

**Action by**

**ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGY IMPROVEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION (R. BEATTIE)**

Senior Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy and Improvement Service (A. Kamali)

**Reasons for the decision**

Our local strategic partnership the Tower Hamlets Partnership brings organisations and communities together to improve services and outcomes for our residents. It aims to provide residents with opportunities to shape, influence and inform the development of the borough's main partnership plans. It seeks to improve the way services are designed and delivered as well as achieving key outcomes.

The partnership's most recent Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-2023 to 'build a stronger, more inclusive and fairer borough' comes to an end soon. The council's Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026) sets out our commitment to develop a new shared vision and ambition for the borough in collaboration with residents, businesses, faith, voluntary and community sector, and public sector organisations.

The Partnership is on a journey of transformation and improvement. A new shared vision and Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan for 2023-2028 will support a focused strategic partnership effort to seize current opportunities and address the most pressing challenges for residents and the borough through partnership leadership and delivery with the council. It will underpin effective collaboration across a range of partnership activities and extend and deepen relationships with residents and with community, voluntary and faith groups.

The new Partnership Plan demonstrates the council's commitment to partnership and leadership of place and is also a starting point in making progress towards two recommendations made by the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, 2023.

**Alternative options**

Not developing a new Partnership Plan for 2023-2028 will leave the Tower Hamlets Partnership without a clear vision and focus for collaboration to deliver better outcomes for residents. This might also hinder the Tower Hamlets Partnership's ability to seek collective agreement from its strategic partners on borough priorities to 2028 and result in missed opportunities to tackle social challenges, for growth and socio-economic development.

**6.5 Children and Families Strategy 2024-2029****DECISION**

1. Note the strategic priorities set out for the Tower Hamlets' Children and Families Partnership in the Accelerate! Children and Families Partnership strategy.
2. Note that the priorities identified in Accelerate! are reflected in the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan.
3. Note the Equalities Impact Assessment set out in paragraph 4 of the report.

**Action by:****ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SERVICES (L. FRASER)**

Acting Director Strategy and Commissioning (L. Richards)

**Reasons for the decision**

This is a noting report.

**Alternative options**

The Council could choose not to endorse the Children and Families Strategy; however as one of the largest partners on the Children and Families Partnership Board this would undermine the work and direction agreed by the Partnership for the next five years.

The strategy provides a framework for delivering on joint priorities for children and families in the borough. Without this strategy it would be difficult to map a clear, coherent direction towards important outcomes for children, young people and families in Tower Hamlets.

**6.6 Youth Justice Board Annual Report**

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed as set out in the report.

**DECISION**

1. Note the Youth Justice Annual Plan

**Action by:****ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICE (L. FRASER)**

Head of Service of Youth Justice and Young Peoples Service (K. Duggan)

**Reasons for the decision**

It's a statutory process to support the grant funding for frontline service delivery.

**Alternative options**

None.

**6.7 Review of the Major Events Policy, Victoria Park**

The pre-decision scrutiny questions were noted.

**DECISION**

1. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to allow for up to 12 Major Event Days per calendar year as set out in paragraph 3.13 of the report.
2. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to increase the capacity threshold for a major event from 5,000 persons at any one time to 20,000 at any one time, and amend the thresholds for small,

medium and large events accordingly as set out in paragraph 3.16 of the report.

3. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to change the categorisation of events considered to be major events, thereby allowing a broader range of events to take place in addition to the major events programme.
4. To note the Equalities specific considerations as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report.

**Action by**

**INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES (R. MISTRY)**

Head of Arts, Parks and Events (C. Boyd)

**Reasons for the decision**

Under the current policy for major events in Victoria Park, approved by Cabinet on 6 January 2021, up to ten major commercial event days are permitted per calendar year in Victoria Park; the policy allows for six major event days with a capacity of up to 49,999, and four major event days with a capacity of up to 39,999 per annum.

A major event is currently defined as an event with an attendance of more than 5,000 at any one time. Major events are generally held in Victoria Park, which is the largest park in the borough.

A review of the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park is recommended in terms of the number of major event days, thresholds for major event days and categorisation of major event days. This will enable the Council to programme a higher number and broader range of events in Victoria Park that support income generation, the local economy and provide cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors.

With a growing population, there is an increased need for well-maintained parks and open spaces. As a result of ongoing reduction to government funding, the Council, like other local authorities, has continued to face budget pressures that have been further impacted by the rising cost of services and cost-of-living crisis. As a result, local authorities have to identify alternative income streams to continue to be able to fund non-statutory services including parks and open spaces.

Tower Hamlets Council, like other London local authorities including Haringey, Lambeth and Southwark, has utilised parks and open spaces to generate income from events including large scale commercial events since 2005. The live events economy is an important source of income for boroughs to be able to maintain parks and contributes to the wider local economy as well as providing opportunities for local engagement.

As part of the budget setting process for 2023/34, Full Council approved an income target of £1,588,000 from commercial event activity in parks and open spaces. This is likely to increase in future years.

#### **Alternative options**

Not alter the existing policy, therefore restricting the number and range of events that can be considered for Victoria Park.

### **6.8 Parks and Open Spaces Capital Improvement Programme**

#### **DECISION**

1. Approve the Parks and Open Spaces Capital Programme and the allocation of Capital funding from s106. The estimated amount requested is £5,246,000 (including £627,000 reallocation of budget provision within the existing programme) and is subject to funding being confirmed through the Capital Governance Process.
2. Authorise the Corporate Director of Communities, after consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources (or their nominee) to agree and enter into the terms and conditions of any agreements required to implement the programme.
3. That a review is undertaken by the Parks Service that identifies any additional council play equipment that should be renewed or replaced on health and safety grounds, setting recommended dates for such action.
4. That a report is brought back to the Mayor in Cabinet by the Corporate Director of Communities at the earliest opportunity identifying any such play equipment along with the costs of renewal and forming part of a structured, risk-based renewal and replacement rolling plan that ensures that health and safety risks in relation to children's play equipment is properly mitigated in a planned way going forward.
5. To note the health and safety consideration in Paragraph 3.10 of the report and risk management section in 5.5 of the report.
6. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment considerations as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report.

#### **Action by**

**INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES (R. MISTRY)**

Head of Arts, Parks and Events (C. Boyd)

#### **Reasons for the decision**

From 2018 to 2023, a Parks Capital Programme was in operation to improve facilities in parks and open spaces. This has been particularly important as COVID-19 increased public use of parks throughout the period. This report requires approval to extend this programme to ensure the continued improvement of parks and open spaces for residents.



The borough is poorly provided with open space and has one of the highest levels of population growth in London. As a consequence, it is essential that Tower Hamlets makes best possible use of the open space we have, and where possible, invests in improvements to enhance our parks, gardens and open spaces.

The Council's Local Plan (September 2017) recognises that Tower Hamlets is a place of extremes and contrasts. While relative poverty has declined, deprivation remains widespread, particularly in central and eastern parts. The health of people in Tower Hamlets is significantly worse than the London and England averages, as are levels of physical activity. Rates of childhood obesity are also significantly higher in the borough than the London and England averages.

At the same time, the overall provision of publicly accessible open space is low compared to other inner London boroughs, as well as being below national standards. Critically, Tower Hamlets is amongst the most densely populated boroughs in London. It is experiencing the highest levels of population growth and is projected to experience continued housing and population growth over the Plan period.

The protection and enhancement of open spaces is therefore a key priority for the Council, which is further set out in the Open Space Strategy, September 2017- 2027. The aims of the strategy are to Protect, Create and Enhance parks and open spaces in the borough. This commitment is reflected in the Council's capital programme, which includes substantial funding for improving the quality, usability and accessibility of existing public open spaces.

This programme addresses one of the key aims of the Open Space Strategy: Enhance - Improving the quality, usability and accessibility of existing publicly accessible open spaces.

### **Alternative options**

Not invest in parks and open spaces, which would have a detrimental impact on communities. Residents would not benefit from increased and improved access to sports, play and recreational facilities that support childhood development, the reduction of childhood obesity and the improved health and wellbeing of all residents.

## **6.9 New fees for the Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall – Register Office**

### **DECISION**

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Resources to agree new fees being introduced by the Registration Service for post wedding celebrations in the new Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall as set out in section 3 of the report.

### **Action by**

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES (J. LORRAINE)**

Head of Customer Services (L. Sykes)

**Reasons for the decision**

This item is being proposed to allow customers and residents the opportunity to hire a new space within St. Georges Town Hall (the Register Office). The new room, called the Garden Suite, will be completed by October 2023 and it will be available initially for post wedding celebrations as part of wedding packages.

**Alternative options**

1.1 N/A

**6.10 Nominations to Outside Bodies – Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf Further Education Trust****DECISION**

1. To replace Councillor Abdul Wahid with Councillor Amin Rahman as the Council's nominee to Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf Further Education Trust.
2. To replace Juned Khan, with Shenaly Miah as the Council's nominee to Stepney Relief in Need Charity.

**Action by****DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND MONITORING OFFICER (J. FASAN)**

Head of Democratic Services (M. Mannion)

**Reasons for the decision**

Having representatives on outside bodies increases the Council's engagement with the local community and improves its potential to offer leadership and guidance in relation to activities taking place in the borough. London-wide initiatives can also offer considerable benefits that promote delivery of the Council's key priorities. Conditions of some London-wide partnerships and trusts are that the Council is represented on their boards.

**Alternative options**

The Mayor could decide not to make appointments to outside bodies at all. However, this is not recommended as it would reduce the Council's opportunity to be involved in and to support good work within the community and it would also reduce the Council's leadership opportunities. There are also a number of bodies where the Council is required or expected to provide a representative.

**7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT****7.1 Changes and amendments to the Permit Transfer Scheme criteria**

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed as set out in the report.

**DECISION**

1. Agree the proposed changes to the Permit Transfer Scheme (PTS) criteria to fulfil the manifesto pledge.
2. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment / specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph four.

**Action by****INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES (R. MISTRY)**

Head of Parking, Mobility and Market Services (M. Darby)

**Reasons for the decision**

To deliver the mayor's manifesto pledge to review the Permit Transfer Scheme.

To reduce the number of families living in overcrowded properties who are reluctant to incur the loss of a vehicle if they accept an offer of more suitably sized accommodation in car-free developments, by allowing them to apply for one permit.

To resolve the most common day-to-day queries and complaint issues about the current PTS.

To ensure the scheme is clear, transparent, and fair for our residents.

**Alternative options**

To keep the current PTS. However, this would not deliver the mayor's manifesto pledge, or resolve the most common day-to-day issues.

To withdraw the PTS. However, this was introduced as a mechanism to address overcrowding in the borough and removing it may lead to fewer households moving.

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

A resolution to exclude press and public was not required.

**9. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****9.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business**

None.

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

None.

**10. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

None.

The meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman  
Cabinet