

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS****RECORD OF THE DECISIONS OF THE CABINET****HELD AT 5.45 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2024****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)

**Officers Present in Person:**

Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive)
Ashraf Ali	(Acting Director of Public Realm)
Yasmin Ali	(Development Project Manager, Place)
Simon Baxter	(Interim Director Public Realm)
Sam Harney	(Mayor's Political Advisor)
Fiona Heyland	(Head of Waste Strategy Policy and Procurement, Public Realm)
Louise Houston	(Environmental Services Improvement Team Leader)
Kamran Rashid	Interim Project Manager
Steve Reddy	(Interim Corporate Director, Children's Services)
Karen Swift	(Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration)
Joel West	(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))
Richard Williams	Business Manager Operational PR

**Officers In Attendance Virtually:**

John Harrison	Interim Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit
Richard Ward	(Interim Head of Contracts and Procurement)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

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

None.

**3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 31 January 2024 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of proceedings.

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

See the minutes.

**5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

**6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**6.1 Planning for School Places 2024/25 Review and Recommendations**

**DECISION**

That the Mayor in Cabinet notes:

1. the factors influencing pupil population change in Tower Hamlets;
2. the current position on the provision of school places in the borough;
3. the projected demand for school places in future years;
4. the steps being taken to manage the sufficiency and sustainability of school places in accordance with the council's school organisation strategy.
5. latest position on SEND, current provision and sufficiency planning;
6. the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 5 of the report.

**Action by:****TERRY BRYAN, SERVICE HEAD FOR PUPIL ACCESS AND SCHOOL SUFFICIENCY (T. BRYAN)**

Head of School Admissions and Place Planning (C. Grace)

**Reasons for the decision**

The council is legally responsible for the planning and provision of school places across its local area. This responsibility includes:

- Ensuring there are sufficient school places (Education Act 1996).
- As far as possible, complying with the preferences expressed by parents (School Standards and Framework Act 1998).
- Increasing opportunities for parental choice (Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- Providing fair access to educational opportunity (Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- Keeping its SEND provision under review and consider if it is sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people in its area (Children and Families Act 2014).

In meeting its responsibility to ensure sufficiency the council is required to address both deficit and surplus school places across the education estate. The council will therefore consider how best to organise schools for the efficient and effective delivery of education. Any revenue benefit that results from changes to the education estate is then redistributed to schools through the school funding formula.

Proposals to provide additional school places will often require long-term planning to implement e.g. opening a new school, expanding an existing one or increasing provision for children and young people with special educational needs. Evidence about the projected need for places must therefore be robust and reviewed regularly, in order to identify emerging need and new projects to inform the council's sufficiency strategy.

The content of this report aligns with the functions of the council as a Local Planning Authority, and the approach taken to make best use of the future school development sites identified in the Tower Hamlets Local Plan.

**Alternative options**

An alternative would be to do nothing to manage the supply of school places. This would likely result in the council having to take a number of short-term measures. Dealing with over-provision would require action to financially support schools who are unable to balance their budgets to maintain quality education. Dealing with under-provision would require action to quickly provide additional places in the form of bulge classes at existing schools or expansions into temporary buildings.

These measures can address issues in the short-term, but they do not provide best value and should not be viewed as a sustainable approach to managing demand for school places.

## 6.2 Determination of Admissions Arrangements for 2025/26

### DECISION

1. Agree the Local Authority Relevant Area (geographical area) for admissions purposes.
2. Agree the admission policy for admission to Community Nursery Schools/Classes in 2025/26, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
3. Agree the admission policy for admission to Community Primary Schools in 2025/26, as set out in Appendix B to the report.
4. Agree the admission policy for admission to Community Secondary Schools in 2025/26 as set out in Appendix C to the report.
5. Agree the schemes for co-ordinating admissions to the Reception Year and Year 7 for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix D to the report.
6. Agree the scheme for co-ordinating 'In-Year' Admissions for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix E to the report.
7. Agree the planned admission number (PAN) for each school in Tower Hamlets in 2026/26, as set out in Appendix F to the report.
8. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1 of the report.

### Action by:

**TERRY BRYAN, SERVICE HEAD FOR PUPIL ACCESS AND SCHOOL SUFFICIENCY (T. BRYAN)**

Head of School Admissions and Place Planning (C. Grace)

### Reasons for the decision

The Local Authority decides and implements its school admission arrangements through local consultation and collaboration, enabling it to fully understand and meet circumstances in its area. In doing so, the Local Authority seeks to provide a clear framework intended to ensure that arrangements are lawful, reasonable and minimise delay to children accessing education.

The proposed schemes, consultation and recommendations in this report are consistent with the Local Authority's statutory duties as set out in the most recent revision of the Department for Education's School Admissions Code (2021).

The co-ordination of all admission arrangements, including nursery and 'in-year' together with school catchment areas provide a framework to plan the provision of school places more coherently, taking account of existing and

future school locations; travelling distance; pupil migration and changes in neighbouring boroughs.

### **Alternative options**

When changes are proposed to the school admission arrangements, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consult and determine the arrangements that will apply for applications to its community schools the following school year, and to formulate a compliant scheme for co-ordinating admissions at the main points of entry (i.e. Reception, Year 3 for junior schools and Year 7 for transfer from primary to secondary school). If Cabinet fails to take such action the Local Authority would be acting contrary to the law.

The recommendations in this report have been prepared with regard to the need for arrangements to be clear, objective, and fair. Due consideration has been given to alternative admission arrangements, but any alternative action could lead to inequality and leave the Local Authority open to legitimate complaint and legal challenge. If Cabinet wished to consider adoption of alternative arrangements, then full consideration would need to be given to the guidance provided, particularly as to the legal requirements.

## **6.3 Reduction and Recycling Plan Progress Report - Quarter 3, 2023**

### **DECISION**

1. Note the Reduction and Recycling Plan 2023-2025, Quarter 3 2023 Progress Report.

### **Action by:**

#### **HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES (R. WILLIAMS)**

Environmental Services Improvement Manager (F. Heyland)

### **Reasons for the decision**

A quarterly progress report was requested as a recommendation of the approval of the RRP at September Cabinet.

### **Alternative options**

This is noting report and there are no alternative options.

## **6.4 Beatrice Tate School Expansion - 41 Southern Grove, London E3 4PX**

### **DECISION:**

1. Approve an increase in budget from £4,050,000 to £6,498,047 from the Higher Needs Capital Provision Allocations (HNCPA) grant and Education funding sources as set out in the details of the report.
2. Approve the contract award to Alexander James Limited for the construction of the extension for the tendered contract sum of £5,503,122 as recommended by the Employers Agent and set out

in the Commercial Price Evaluation Report (Appendix 1 to the report).

3. To Note the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in Paragraph 5 of the report as appropriate.

**Action by:**

**HEAD OF CAPITAL DELIVERY (Y. ALI)**

Principal Project Manager - Capital Delivery (N. Rahman)

**Reasons for the decision**

Mayoral approval is requested to increase the project budget to £6,498,047 to enable the contractor to be appointed based on the contract sum of £5,503,122.

Delaying the decision will result in further start on site delay, leading to disruption to school operations and inability to meet the completion date of March 2025. This will also have impact on delivering vacant possession of the Southern Grove site, resulting in preventing the housing development proposals progressing.

To note significant construction cost increases and design package expenditure in the intervening years following Cabinet approval of the Beatrice Tate Expansion project in September 2020 resulting from a rise in inflation, surge in energy prices, increases in materials, labour costs and essential revisions of the scheme design.

**Alternative options**

There are no viable alternative options. Delay will increase costs to the Council, elongated the construction programme for the expansion project and delay the vacant possession of the Southern Grove site to enable housing delivery.

It is to be noted programme delay also restricts the Councils ability to provide adequate numbers of SEND pupil places in 2024

**7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

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

A motion to exclude the press and public was not required.

**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.