



Meeting of the

Tower Hamlets Council

Agenda

Wednesday, 15 November 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

VENUE

Council Chamber,
Whitechapel Town Hall
160 Whitechapel Road,
London E1 1BJ

Meeting Webcast

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system.
<http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. The press and public are encouraged to watch the meeting on line.

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Chief Executive's Office

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To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL** at **7.00 p.m.** on **WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2023**

Stephen Halsey
Chief Executive



Public Information

Viewing Council Meetings

Except where any exempt/restricted documents are being discussed, the public are welcome to view this meeting through the Council's webcast system.

Meeting Webcast and Public attendance

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system. <http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> The press and public are encouraged to watch this meeting on line

Please note: It is also possible to attend meetings in person. Places in the public gallery are allocated on a first come, first served basis from the reception at the Town Hall on the day of the meeting.

Electronic agendas reports and minutes.

Copies of agendas, reports and minutes for council meetings can also be found on our website from day of publication.

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Agendas are available on the Modern.Gov, Windows, iPad and Android apps.



QR code for
smart phone
users

Public Information

The meeting is being held at the Council's Town Hall.

Full Council is made up of the Mayor and the 45 Councillors. It's responsibilities include: deciding the Council's overall policies and setting the budget for the year. It also appoints the Council's Committees at the Annual Meeting. In addition, the Council provides opportunities to discuss local issues and is a means by which the Mayor and Cabinet can be held to account in public

The agenda for this ordinary Council meetings comprises:

- Apologies for absence from Members
- Declarations of Interests.
- Minutes of the previous meeting.
- Announcements from the Speaker or the Chief Executive of the Council.
- Petitions for presentation (over 30 signatures) or for debate (over 2000 signatures). A maximum of 4 Petitions that meet the criteria may be discussed taken in the order of receipt.
- Mayor's report followed by Opposition Leader's response. Written report (if any) to be published shortly before the meeting.
- Main Motion debates (including any amendments received)
- Reports requiring Full Council approval
- Member Questions (30 minutes). Questions not put to receive a written response.
- Motions from Members received on notice (including any amendments received). Consideration of these subject to time constraints.
- Any Urgent motions from Members.

Further details on the process for considering these items is set out on the covering reports in the agenda.

How can I watch the meeting?

Except when an exempt item is under discussion, the meeting will be broadcast live for public viewing via our Webcasting portal <https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. Details of the broadcasting arrangements will be published on the agenda front sheet.

Public Attendance and Conduct at Meetings

The public may also watch the Council meeting in the public gallery. To attend please collect a ticket from reception at the town hall. We request that you show courtesy to all present and do not interrupt the meeting. The intention is not to specifically webcast members of the public, however, it is possible that you may be filmed in the background. By attending the meeting you are agreeing to this condition.

Please also switch off mobile phones or turn them on silent.

If you are scheduled to present a petition in person at the meeting, please sit in the reserved seating in the front row. You will be called to address the meeting at the appropriate time

If the fire alarm rings please follow the instructions of the Facilities Staff who will direct you to the exits.



Procedure at the meeting.

Just before the start of the meeting, the macebearer will ask everyone to be upstanding for the Speaker. The Speaker of the Council is the Chair of the meeting and is in charge of the debate. Their role is to control the meeting, including the order of speakers, and to ensure that the business is carried out properly. The Speaker will confirm the expected meeting etiquette for Council meeting, including the following:

- The Speaker will determine the order of speakers - usually from a list of speakers.
- That any online participants must mute their microphones when not speaking.
- Such participants should also switch off their cameras when not speaking.
- All Members may contribute to the discussions, but only the Members physically present in the chamber may vote on items requiring a decision.

Order of business

The Speaker may agree to change the order of business at the meeting. In addition, the Speaker may adjourn the meeting for a period of time or agree an extension to the time limit for the meeting (by up to half hour beyond the three-hour limit). To change the order of business, a Member will need to formally move a motion seeking approval for the requested change. Any such motions will be put to the vote.

Voting

The items requiring a decision will normally be determined by a show of hands or an electronic vote (by Members present in the meeting room). If there are an equal number of votes for and against an item of business, the Speaker will have a second or casting vote.

Decisions and Minutes

The decisions will be published on the website 2 days after the meeting. The draft minutes will be published around 10 working days after the meeting.

Publication of Agenda papers.

Electronic copies of the Council agenda will be published on the Council's Website on the relevant Committee pages at least five clear working days before the meeting.

To view meeting papers and to be alerted when agendas have been published visit: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee. Council documents are also available on 'Mod.Gov' iPad, Android and Windows tablet apps downloadable for free from their respective app stores.

Publication of tabled papers

Any additional documents (such as the Mayor's report, amendments to motions and urgent motions) will normally be published on the Council meeting website either shortly before or during the meeting.



London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Council

Wednesday, 15 November 2023

7.00 p.m.

PAGE NUMBER

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

9 - 10

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest, identified in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine; whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are also reminded to declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately it is the Members' responsibility to identify any interests and also update their register of interests form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of an interest, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services.

3. MINUTES

11 - 52

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 27th September 2023.

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

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

53 - 58

The Council Procedure Rules provide for a maximum of four petitions to be discussed at an Ordinary Meeting of the Council.



The attached report presents the received petitions to be discussed. Should any additional petitions be received they will be listed to be noted but not discussed.

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Council's Constitution provides for the Elected Mayor to give a report at each Ordinary Council Meeting.

A maximum of six minutes is allowed for the Elected Mayor's report, following which the Speaker of the Council will invite the leaders of the opposition groups to respond for up to two minutes each should they so wish. Following those contributions, the Mayor may reply for up to two minutes.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE 59 - 62

To debate a Motion submitted by the Administration in accordance with Rules 11 and 13 of the Council's Constitution. The debate will last for a maximum of 30 minutes.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE 63 - 66

To debate a Motion submitted by the Opposition Group in accordance with Rules 11 and 13 of the Council's Constitution. The debate will last for a maximum of 30 minutes.

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

9.1 Report of the Standards Advisory Committee: Adoption of the Updated Member / Officer Relations Protocol 67 - 92

To consider the report of the Standards Advisory Committee.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Nil items.

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 93 - 98

The questions which have been received from Councillors to be put at this Council meeting are set out in the attached report. A maximum period of 30 minutes is allocated to this agenda item.



12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

99 - 102

The motions submitted by Councillors for debate at this meeting are set out in the attached report.



Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests. In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

Guidance on Predetermination and Bias

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

Further Advice contact: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, Tel: 0207 364 4348.

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

| Subject | Prescribed description |
|---|--|
| Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. |
| Sponsorship | Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. |
| Contracts | Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged. |
| Land | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority. |
| Licences | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer. |
| Corporate tenancies | Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest. |
| Securities | Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class. |

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.08 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present:

| | |
|--|---|
| Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Member) | Councillor Iqbal Hossain (Member) |
| Councillor Faroque Ahmed (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 Abdul Malik (Member) |
| Councillor Maisha Begum (Member) | Councillor Abdul Mannan (Member) |
| Councillor Nathalie Bienfait (Member) | Councillor Ana Miah (Member) |
| Councillor Rachel Blake (Member) | Councillor Ayas Miah (Member) |
| Councillor Mufeedah Bustin (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) |
| Councillor Peter Golds (Member) | |

Agenda Order

During the meeting, Members agreed to change the order of business. To aid clarity the minutes are presented in the order items appear on the Agenda. At the meeting Agenda Item 13 (Urgent Motion on Waste) was taken during Agenda Item 7 (Administration Motion for Debate).

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

The Speaker of the Council provided an update on engagements he had undertaken since the last Council meeting in July 2023. He said he had attended events celebrating the academic and sporting achievements of various organisations including a community group which had won their cup for a third year in a row. Other highlights included:

- The awards the Council had won at the London in Bloom awards ceremony. The Speaker was particularly pleased with this owing to his interest in gardening. He said he was proud to see Tower Hamlets had won 4 categories and had achieved a gold award in many other categories. He congratulated everyone involved in this achievement.
- The Speaker had visited Billingsgate market with the Lord Mayor to collect the annual rent payment of one Salmon, which had been donated to the St Joseph's Hospice.
- He had attended the annual Merchant Navy Memorial Day at Trinity Square Gardens, as the first citizen of the borough.
- The Speaker expressed his condolences for the victims of the natural disasters in Libya and Morocco and said his thoughts and prayers were with those who had lost so much.
- The Speaker paid condolences and tribute to Mr Aslam Uddin who had died recently. He said Mr Aslam was a well-respected community activist and former co-ordinator of the Council of Mosques in Tower Hamlets. Councillor Maium Talukdar and Councillor Abdal Ullah also expressed their condolences and acknowledged Mr Uddin's achievements on behalf of their groups.

Finally, the Speaker wished Mr Ian Polston, member of the facilities management team the best for the future. Mr Polston was moving to a new role within the Council however had provided support to Town Hall and Council meetings over many years, ensuring they ran smoothly.

Procedural Motions

Councillor Kabir Hussain moved Procedure Motion 12.1 (n) to suspend Procedure Rule 11.1 to allow for an Urgent Motion to be tabled on the Waste Strike. This was seconded by Councillor Maium Talukdar.

Councillor Saied Ahmed moved Procedure Rule 12.1 (g) to withdraw the Administration Motion for Debate on Management of Council Assets and Procedure Rule 12.1 (c) to change the Order of Business to consider the above Urgent Motion on the Waste Strike under Agenda Item 7 (Administration Motion for Debate) on the grounds of urgency due to the impact the strike was having on residents. These were seconded by Councillor Maium Talukdar.

Councillor Sabina Akhtar moved Procedure Rule 12.1 (g) to withdraw the Motion at Agenda Item 12.2 on Waste. This was seconded by Councillor Sirajul Islam.

The Speaker accepted the reasons for urgency in respect of accepting the Urgent Motion and changing the order of business. The above Procedural Motions were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Amy Lee

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

Councillor Musthak Ahmed and Councillor Amin Rahman declared a non-pecuniary – other registerable interest in Agenda Item 8 (Opposition Motion for Debate) and declared they had been appointed Board Members of Tower Hamlets Community Housing by the Council.

The Speaker, Councillor Jahed Choudhury and Councillors Abdul Mannan, Ayas Miah, Bodrul Choudhury and Ohid Ahmed declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 8 (Opposition Motion for Debate), as either tenants and/or leaseholders of property owned by Tower Hamlets Community Housing or Poplar HARCA.

Councillor Maisha Begum declared an Other Non-Registerable Interest in that a family member were a tenant/leaseholder of Tower Hamlets Community Housing or Poplar HARCA.

The Monitoring Officer granted a dispensation, to the above-named members due to the impact on the political balance at the meeting, owing to the large number of declarations made.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed left the chamber and did not participate in the debate.

3. **MINUTES**

Council **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agreed that the minutes of the extraordinary and ordinary Council meeting of 19th July 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**

Announcements from the Chief Executive

- The Covid & Flu vaccine programme was launched nationally on the 11th September. Eligible groups can receive their vaccines from several GP surgeries and community pharmacies.
- The LGA Peer review took place week commencing 18th – 22nd September. The review entails a process of observation and analysis, with 175 staff members from diverse services interviewed. The results are positive, with the Peer reviewers praising the direction of travel of the Council.
- The Council has won several awards such as the Government Property Award for 2023 for Project of the year, relating to the new Town Hall. The London in Bloom Awards ceremony, including Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park winning the Large Conservation, Large Cemetery/Cremation category and Victoria Park achieving Gold for Large Park/Heritage Park/Garden category.
- The Chief Executive Roadshows were currently taking place and have been well attended by staff who have put a range of questions and concerns to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive said this type of staff engagement was crucial during this time of improvement and transformation.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

Council **RESOLVED** to note:

The Petition relating to the Compulsory Purchase of the Westferry Printworks for a school, was withdrawn by the Petitioner prior to the start of the Council meeting.

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.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

Council **RESOLVED** to note:

The Administration motion on the Management of Council Assets was withdrawn by consent of members, through a vote.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

TOWER HAMLETS COMMUNITY HOUSING

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda relating to Tower Hamlets Community Housing, that had been moved by Councillor Marc Francis and seconded by Councillor Asma Islam.

Council also considered the amendment proposed by Councillor Kabir Ahmed and seconded by Councillor Abdul Mannan, as set out in the supplementary agenda.

ADDITIONS - BOLD

DELETIONS - ~~STRUCKTHROUGH~~

This Council notes:

- THCH was founded by stock transfers from LBTH and for many years delivered high-quality housing management as well as the regeneration of estates and community development;
- THCH was recently downgraded to a G3 and V3-rating by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) for both governance and financial viability;
- The RSH has encouraged THCH to be taken over by another housing association and THCH has subsequently begun a consultation on a merger with Poplar HARCA;
- The RSH has a very poor track record in enforcing mergers between housing associations in Tower Hamlets and doesn't proactively take any account of residents' views.
- **That the Mayor has twice met with THCH residents to hear and discuss their concerns, and has instructed Officers to monitor the merger and any adverse impacts on them.**
- **That the Mayor and Officers are reviewing RSL performance more broadly and are preparing a new policy on strengthening governance.**
- **That in October the Social Housing Ombudsman is coming to the Town Hall for an event to be chaired by the Mayor to address all RSL residents concerns.**

This Council believes:

- THCH tenants and leaseholders deserve a much better service than they have been getting from their landlord for several years;
- LBTH has an ongoing obligation to residents living on those estates transferred to ensure the promises made by are delivered consistently;
- Enforced mergers of local stock transfer housing associations have sometimes resulted in residents receiving an even worse service from the social landlord they join;

- The views of tenants and leaseholders in the future of their housing association should be paramount in any decision by the Board of THCH and the RSH.

This Council resolves:

- To call on the Mayor to make representations to the RSH calling for the views of residents of THCH to be fully taken into account prior to a decision on any merger;
- ~~To call on the Mayor to instruct council officers to urgently undertake a feasibility on the financial and practical implications of requesting a return of THCH stock to LBTH;~~
- ~~To call on the Mayor to arrange a public meeting with residents of THCH to hear to listen directly to their experience of its services and thoughts what should happen.~~
- **To continue supporting those residents affected by the merger and to ensure good channels of communication are maintained for those residents' concerns;**
- **To support the Social Housing Ombudsman event taking place in October and encourage concerned THCH residents to attend.**
- **To support the Mayor in his efforts to strengthen RSL governance and resident engagement, and ensure that the services they provide improve.**

Following debate, the amendment moved by Councillor Kabir Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The motion as amended by Councillor Kabir Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- THCH was founded by stock transfers from LBTH and for many years delivered high-quality housing management as well as the regeneration of estates and community development;
- THCH was recently downgraded to a G3 and V3-rating by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) for both governance and financial viability;
- The RSH has encouraged THCH to be taken over by another housing association and THCH has subsequently begun a consultation on a merger with Poplar HARCA;
- The RSH has a very poor track record in enforcing mergers between housing associations in Tower Hamlets and doesn't proactively take any account of residents' views.
- That the Mayor has twice met with THCH residents to hear and discuss their concerns, and has instructed Officers to monitor the merger and any adverse impacts on them.

- That the Mayor and Officers are reviewing RSL performance more broadly and are preparing a new policy on strengthening governance.
- That in October the Social Housing Ombudsman is coming to the Town Hall for an event to be chaired by the Mayor to address all RSL residents concerns.

This Council believes:

- THCH tenants and leaseholders deserve a much better service than they have been getting from their landlord for several years;
- LBTH has an ongoing obligation to residents living on those estates transferred to ensure the promises made by are delivered consistently;
- Enforced mergers of local stock transfer housing associations have sometimes resulted in residents receiving an even worse service from the social landlord they join;
- The views of tenants and leaseholders in the future of their housing association should be paramount in any decision by the Board of THCH and the RSH.

This Council resolves:

- To call on the Mayor to make representations to the RSH calling for the views of residents of THCH to be fully taken into account prior to a decision on any merger;
- To continue supporting those residents affected by the merger and to ensure good channels of communication are maintained for those residents' concerns;
- To support the Social Housing Ombudsman event taking place in October and encourage concerned THCH residents to attend.
- To support the Mayor in his efforts to strengthen RSL governance and resident engagement, and ensure that the services they provide improve.

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**9.1 Report of Cabinet: Statement of Licensing Policy 2023**

Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency presented the Statement of Licensing Policy 2023 report. He explained Council was required to approve the Licensing Policy, which had been to Cabinet and would take effect from 1st November 2023.

RESOLVED

Council **AGREED** to:

1. Adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy to take effect from 1st November 2023.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Annual Report of the Standards Advisory Committee

Mr John Pulford, Independent Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee presented the annual report. He outlined the achievements of the Committee before members added their comments. In particular, Members of the Council thanked John Pulford and the Co-opted Members of the Committee for their hard work and support throughout the year.

RESOLVED

Council **AGREED** to:

1. Note the annual report of the Standards Advisory Committee for 2022-23.

10.2 Appointment of a Co-Opted Member to the Standards Advisory Committee

Mr John Pulford, Independent Chair of the Standard Advisory Committee stated the Committee had run a recruitment exercise to fill a vacancy for a co-opted member on the Committee. He requested Council to approve the appointment of the co-optee selected.

RESOLVED

Council **AGREED** to:

1. The appointment of Faham Sinan-Katamba as a co-opted member of the Standards Advisory Committee for a four-year term, expiring 28th September 2027.

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The following questions and in each case supplementary questions were put (except where indicated) and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member.

11.1 Question from Councillor Amin Rahman.

Could the lead member provide an update on the status of the council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for many years under the previous administration.

Response from Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living.

Thank you for your question. The accounts had been left unsigned for many years by the previous administration. However, I am pleased to report that 2016/17 and 2017/18 accounts had their certificates issued by KPMG in March 2023, so these years are now completed.

For 2018/19 and 2019/20 accounts, the audits are close to completion in terms of the number of significant issues being investigated, there being only one remaining. The Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will be meeting with Deloitte within the coming week to establish a clear commitment and assurance regarding Deloitte ability to resource the process to achieve timelines required for November Audit Committee approval and to ensure a smooth handover to our newly appointed auditors Ernst & Young.

The historical low for our council has been rectified.

Supplementary question from Councillor Amin Rahman.

Can you provide update on whether the financial statements, for more current years will be affected due to the issues raised by the auditors in the past?

Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living.

We now have a permanent Section 151 officer, which is good news for the Council. As each year's accounts move closer to finalisation, there is a great deal of learning that then needs to be applied to subsequent years. Officers are pro-actively applying these improvements, with the aim of them being reflected in future years' accounts at first publication. As a result, the 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts have not been produced yet.

11.2 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin.

When will the Mayor be in a position to communicate the outcome of his review of the council's asset portfolio? Many organisations are left in limbo, including those waiting 18 months for decisions on meanwhile use properties, and in my ward, lease renewals for the Mudchute and operators for Island Gardens café.

Response from Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living.

The review of transactions is an ongoing process, and transactions are progressing following completion of reviews. Some cases are more complex than others, and outcomes will be communicated once all the issues have been considered. The decisions on the two specific cases mentioned have been completed and the relevant organisations are being informed.

The Mayor has always supported those organisations in the third sector, unlike the previous administration who reduced recipients and reducing funding. Mayor will significantly increase the funding and double the number.

Supplementary question from Councillor Mufedah Bustin.

Looking at the Mayor's grants programme, the funding applied to advice services has been reduced. Most of the funding for grants has been taken from the neighbourhood CIL, from the Island and invested in other parts of the Borough. I want to know when will Mudchute and the operators of Island Gardens Café know about the offer made to them.

Response from Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living.

The process followed for review was officer led and has been reviewed by the Chief Executive. This has been agreed by Cabinet. The administration is making the right choices unlike the previous labour administration.

11.3 Question from Councillor Musthak Ahmed.

Can the lead member share the findings of the independent investigation into housing management following the complaint brought by 31 members of staff in the department?

Response from Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding.

I'd like to thank the booking team for the exceptional work they have done, to progress this matter. However, the matter has yet not been finalised but has been progressed following our internal procedures. At this stage it would not be appropriate to share any details on this matter given that it relates to confidential staffing matters. Once the matter has been concluded, and if there are broad outcomes that can be shared, without disclosing confidential information, then this can be done.

11.4 Question from Councillor Asma Islam.

Can the Mayor and lead member clarify what percentage of the administration's 1000 a year house building target will be for social rent?

Response from Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding.

The majority of affordable homes are delivered via the planning process. The current Local Plan has a 35% habitable rooms affordable housing onsite requirement with a tenure split of 70% affordable/social rent and 30% intermediate. We are currently working on a new Local Plan and aim to increase the level of affordable/social rented accommodation delivered through the planning process.

Supplementary question from Councillor Asma Islam .

So, it's a question of let's see how we get along then?

Response from Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding.

We want to exceed this 70/30 split. We have invested £73million additional funds identified in housing capital at Cabinet. We are looking to increase the split to 80/20 and hope to deliver 1000 council units plus more from other social housing developments.

11.5 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed.

Could the lead member provide an update on the purpose, parameters and processes of the LGA Corporate Peer Review that took place between 18th and 22nd September?

Response from Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living.

LGA Corporate Peer Challenges are coordinated by the Local Government Association on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The council invited the LGA to carry this out as it has been 5 years since our last full Corporate Peer Challenge and the expectation from government is that these happen on a 5-year cycle.

The Corporate Peer Challenge is an effective and well-regarded sector led improvement tool. By bringing together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer peers it provides local authorities with robust, credible challenge and support across five core strategic areas:

- Local priorities and outcomes
- Organisational and place leadership
- Governance and culture
- Financial planning and management
- Capacity for improvement

The council will receive a report and come up with an action plan which we will embed into our improvement and transformation work. The LGA will then carry out a progress review 6-8 months after the publication of their report.

Supplementary question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed.

What is the timeline for the first report from the LGA peer review?

Response from Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living.

The first report will be in November 2023.

11.6 Question from Councillor Rachel Blake.

Could the lead member inform me when residents in Bow East will have their regular food waste collections resume. Residents in my ward and across the borough have spent weeks without collection.

Response from Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency.

Collections of food waste had been disrupted over a number of weeks during the summer and we must apologise for the impact on residents. This was due to an increase in absence from sickness and staff taking a backlog of annual leave. We apologise for the level of disruption and inconvenience this has caused.

Action is being taken to ensure we have sufficient staff cover to maintain collections, with plans being developed to ensure food and waste services are not disrupted due to staff sickness or leave. Post strike action, we expect to be able to deliver this improvement in service, with improved monitoring and follow up of missed collection.

Supplementary question from Councillor Rachel Blake.

It's clear the Mayor and lead members have very little real interest in the Environment. I note the Lead members apology to residents of Bow East for the appalling service they have received but will an apology be communicated to the residents of Bow Quarter, Annie Besant Close, Towergate House and Taylor Place, whose waste collection only seems to be collected when ward councillors get involved. What is being done to resolve this issue?

Response from Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency.

Members and residents are encouraged to use the 'Find it, fix it' app to report missing collections. The Mayor has invested £10m in this crisis and £2.1m to improve recycling services. Residents are reminded to download and use the app.

11.7 Question from Councillor Kamarul Hussain.

Could the lead member outline how the council is looking to make Workpath more accessible to the residents of Tower hamlets? It is understood plans are being discussed to redesign the service and move it to the new Town Hall in Whitechapel as part of an efficiency and improvement exercise.

Response from Councillor Wahid Ali, Cabinet member for Jobs, Skills and Growth.

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the hard work of the Workpath team who assist residents in finding employment. With the resident's hub moving into the Town Hall, we have embedded ourselves in the community and have the ability to signpost people and provide a more integrated service.

11.8 Question from Councillor Amy Lee.

Councillor Lee was not present to ask the question, however it was agreed that a written response would be provided to her question.

11.9 Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled.

Following coverage of issues within the council's housing management service, can the lead member provide an update on what steps have been taken to address outstanding issues and how future issues will be addressed?

Response from Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding.

Recent media coverage referenced several concerns from staff within the Homelessness Service.

The council takes staff wellbeing seriously and acknowledges that the Homelessness Service has experienced significant pressure in previous months.

- The pressure is being felt London-wide.
- It is related to an increase in the number of approaches from residents for homelessness assistance due to the cost-of-living crisis, families not being able to continue to house family members and an increase in evictions from private rented homes due to the eviction ban, that was in place during Covid, being lifted.
- There is a lack availability of suitable accommodation in and around London.
- In quarter 1 this year only 1.9% of the private rentals in London were at LHA rates.

There are several measures that are in place now to address service pressures and staff wellbeing.

We will continue to monitor service pressures and the impact on staff, and we will adjust service provision in consultation with staff to better meet resident needs and build staff resilience.

Supplementary question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled.

Can you state what measures have been put in place to address the issue.

Response from Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding.

Measures in place:

- 22 extra posts being recruited to across the service at all levels to build resilience and extra capacity in the service.
- £600k of ICT investment to consolidate ICT systems, remove bureaucracy, and double entry.
- ICT roadmap identifying improvements that will run in parallel to each other.
- Improved connectivity in the Residents' Hub.
- Quematic queuing system installed in the Residents' Hub.
- Electronic forms to enable signature of legal documents by those in temporary accommodation therefore avoiding a return to the office.
- Revised Homelessness online form now 'live' reducing staff time inputting data.
- Staff wellbeing survey in June 2023 which identified 40 actions to improve staff wellbeing and workflows. These have been actioned with the remaining ones due for action completing end of September 2023

11.10 Question from Councillor Ayas Miah.

DVLA statistics show that there has been a drop in the number of low emission vehicles registered in the borough in the last year, despite numbers increasing elsewhere in the country. Could the lead member inform me what the borough is doing to increase the uptake of electric/low emission vehicles and explain why this may not be working?

Response from Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency.

There are three types of charging points – fast, standard and slow charging points. We need to find places to increase the availability of public charging points. The council is working on plans for a significant increase in publicly available charging points in the borough. There are currently 350 public chargers in Tower Hamlets and the plans are for an additional 2000 chargers over the next three years. These include new rapid, fast and standard chargers which will start to be installed in early 2024.

11.11 Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury.

Following the momentous launch of free school meals for over 38,000 additional children across tower hamlets - including at secondary level - could the lead member provide an update on what schools, parents and pupils have had to say about the new service?

Response from Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning.

Nearly all the schools in the borough now offer free school meals. We have been able to deliver this initiative ahead of the predicted schedule and praise must be given to the commitment and collaboration of headteachers.

The programme was launched at Swanlea School, in front of local and national media and will help support parents during the cost-of-living crisis. The feedback has been positive with schools reporting there had been an uptake in the number of students accessing free school meals.

Supplementary question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury.

The Deputy Mayor and I attended the LGA training course last week and the Council was commended for the introduction of universal Free School meals. Members for other authorities were grateful for this.

Response from Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning.

Thank you, Councillor Choudhury. It was a proud moment for the Council and people of this Borough. The initiative and investment were appreciated by members, politicians and officers.

11.12 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar.

Can the lead member confirm:

- Whether all buildings within the LBTH estate have been surveyed for RAAC (including schools)?
- Can he detail the mitigation measures for where RAAC has been found?
- If surveys have not been completed, can he provide a timeline for their completion?

Response from Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning.

Thank you for the question. As you'll be aware this is a national problem and it's important that we seek to keep children and staff safe in the schools, that we operate and maintain.

We are less effected than other local authorities. Stepney All Saints, Church of England is closed at present however the school is in discussion with the DfE. We are keeping a close eye on this situation. Other schools affected are local authority-maintained school Seven Mills, the affected area (main hall) has been closed to pupils with alternative spaces within the school being used for impacted activities.

Supplementary question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar.

Stepney All Saints is in my ward. What is the latest update as to when the school can reopen?

Response from Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning.

The school and officers of the Council are in negotiations with the DfE. Safety of children and staff is vital. We must ensure the safety of all and as such the school will re-open when it's safe to do so.

11.13 Question from Cllr Ahmodul Kabir

Could the lead member provide an update on the ongoing work to address the service issues outlined in the waste emergency declared by the mayor last year?

Response from Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency.

The declaration of a waste emergency by the Mayor was a statement of intent to clean up our borough.

We have started by redesigning the service from within. Plans are underway to improve management and support of front-line teams, re-design collection routes, to continue with investment in greening our fleet, to focus on recycling improvements, to improve standards of street cleansing and target environmental crime such as fly tipping, litter and graffiti. Our plans also include improvements to our commercial waste service. To include a more flexible and reliable waste and recycling offer that meets the needs of customers, with improved on-line ordering / digital account management.

We have re-launched our Find It Fix App and are promoting this widely. This makes it easier to report problems that need action. As we work towards a cleaner borough, it's important for our residents to act as our eyes and ears by reporting street waste using Find It Fix It. We will continue to work with all our staff and front-line teams to ensure a cleaner and greener future for Tower Hamlets.

Questions 11.8 was not put due to the absence of the questioner and Questions 11.14 to 11.27 were not put due to lack of time. The written responses are attached at **Appendix A**.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Motion 12.2 was withdrawn by consent of Members through a vote. Motions 12.1 and 12.3 were not considered due to lack of time.

13. URGENT MOTION

EMERGENCY MOTION ON THE WASTE STRIKE

Council considered the urgent motion as printed in the supplementary agenda on the waste strike that had been moved by Councillor Kabir Hussain and seconded by Councillor Maium Talukdar.

Following debate, the motion moved by Councillor Kabir Hussain was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED

Council notes:

- The good relationship between the present administration and frontline workers, alongside the recognised trade unions of Tower Hamlets Council
- The historical work that Mayor Lutfur Rahman and organised workers in Tower Hamlets have engaged in, and the open, frank and honest dialogue that has always existed between his administrations and the Council's workforce and recognised Trade Unions.
- The invaluable contribution that frontline workers make across Tower Hamlets – from carers to nurses, Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers to refuse workers.
- That during the pandemic – in all conditions – the borough's refuse workers risked their lives to keep the borough's streets clean, sanitary, and safe.
- That they often risked their lives dealing with and disposing off used, contaminated Personal, Protective Equipment (PPE), ensuring that residents of the borough could remain safe from the threat of the Covid-19 virus.
- That many of these workers are on the most precarious and insecure forms of employment – namely agency contracts.
- That when these workers marched on the Town Hall in October last year, they were welcomed and listened to by the Mayor and his

administration, who acknowledged their invaluable contribution in the declaration of a Waste Emergency the following month.

- That these workers' removal of their labour was not an attack on the people of this borough, but a legitimate struggle against a cost-of-living crisis uncaused by them.
- That the resolution of this strike reiterates the good, healthy relationship between the Mayor, the Council, Trade Unions and the workforce.
- That this has been recognised by Unite the Union, who have confirmed that 'Lutfur Rahman played a part in helping to resolve' the recent discussions around pay.
- That this strike has caused immense reputational damage to the Council.

Council believes:

- That working people have a right to democratically remove their labour through their Trade Unions, and that the recent strike was a legitimate exercising of this right.
- That the result achieved following constructive negotiations between the frontline workers, their Trade Union (Unite the Union), Council Officers and the Mayor's Office demonstrates what can be achieved when respective parties sit down and treat one another with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- That the ending of the strike demonstrates that there are cohesive, productive and robust relationships across the council, and how open dialogue and frank discussions can lead to resolutions and results.
- That where possible, all workers should be guaranteed the right to stable, secure work as and when they want it.
- That Mayor Lutfur Rahman has always looked to secure such employ for working people across Tower Hamlets – whether in the Leisure Service, Care Service and now in the Council's refuse services.

Council resolves:

- To reaffirm its commitment to support the deal struck between frontline workers and the Council yesterday.
- To recognise the role that the Mayor and officers played in the successful negotiation of the end of this strike.
- To confirm the insourcing of agency workers in the refuse service onto in-house council contracts.
- To support frontline workers and to continue to work with the Council's trade unions to support workers in the service.
- To work with officers, partners and stakeholders to address the Council's reputational damage.

The meeting ended at 10.09 p.m.

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Item 11: Member Questions and Answers

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| <p>11.1</p> | <p>Question from Councillor Amin Rahman</p> | <p>Could the lead member provide an update on the status of the council’s outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for many years under the previous administration.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The 2016/17 and 2017/18 accounts had their certificates issued by KPMG in March 2023, so these years are now completed.</p> <p>For 2018/19 and 2019/20 accounts, the audits are close to completion in terms of the number of significant issues being investigated, there being only one remaining.</p> <p>This outstanding significant issue relates to the actuarial valuation of the Pension Fund for the historical period in question and the resulting entries that then need to be applied to the accounts. At the time of drafting this response, officers continue to work their way through the discrepancies (which numbered in their thousands) and are on track to complete this task within the required timeframe to allow Deloitte some time to review the findings. Their actuarial expert estimated a period of 2 further weeks would be required (after all council responses are complete and provided to them).</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will be meeting with Deloitte within the coming week to establish a clear commitment and assurance regarding Deloitte ability to resource the process to achieve timelines required for November Audit Committee approval and to ensure a smooth handover to our newly appointed auditors Ernst &Young</p> <p>A further meeting has been diarised for 2nd October at a senior operational level to ensure the outcome of the above meeting translates to an agreed achievable timeline for the November Audit Committee to approve the accounts.</p> <p>The 2020/21 accounts were first produced, as draft, in January 2022 (and presented to Audit Cttee). As a result of learning arising from the ongoing audits of 2018/19 and 2019/20, a second version of the 2020/21 accounts was presented to Deloitte in March 2023, and audit began in July.</p> <p>Audit has been ongoing since July, and there are indications of a far better engagement and performance from officers than in previous years; however, officers will acknowledge that there is still further work to do, and there may still be some difficulties ahead, although at the most recent high-level meeting with the Deloitte</p> |
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| | | <p>partner, the Senior Audit Manager stated that, despite having noted a few errors, he hadn't noted anything yet which he would consider alarming.</p> <p>Officers are conscious that some errors are being identified, and it will be necessary to produce a third version of the 2020/21 accounts.</p> <p>As each year's accounts move closer to finalisation, there is a great deal of learning that then needs to be applied to subsequent years. Officers are pro-actively applying these improvements, with the aim of them being reflected in future years' accounts at first publication. [As a result, the 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts have not been produced yet.]</p> |
| 11.2 | <p>Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin</p> | <p>When will the Mayor be in a position to communicate the outcome of his review of the council's asset portfolio? Many organisations are left in limbo, including those waiting 18 months for decisions on meanwhile use properties, and in my ward, lease renewals for the Mudchute and operators for Island Gardens café.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The review of transactions is an ongoing process, and transactions are progressing following completion of reviews. Some cases are more complex than others, and outcomes will be communicated once all the issues have been considered. The decisions on the two specific cases mentioned have been completed and the relevant organisations are being informed.</p> |
| 11.3 | <p>Question from Councillor Musthak Ahmed</p> | <p>Can the lead member share the findings of the independent investigation into housing management following the complaint brought by 31 members of staff in the department?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Thank you for raising this matter with us.</p> <p>This matter has yet not been finalised but has been progressed following our internal procedures. At this stage it would not be appropriate to share any details on this matter given that it relates to confidential staffing matters. Once the matter has been concluded, and if there are broad outcomes that can be shared, without disclosing confidential information, then this can be done.</p> <p>However, members can be reassured that this matter has been given the priority it deserves, and all parties supported throughout the process.</p> |

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| 11.4 | Question from Councillor Asma Islam | <p>Can the Mayor and lead member clarify what percentage of the administration's 1000 a year house building target will be for social rent?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The majority of affordable homes are delivered via the planning process. The current Local Plan has a 35% habitable rooms affordable housing onsite requirement with a tenure split of 70% affordable/social rent and 30% intermediate. We are currently working on a new Local Plan and aim to increase the level of affordable/social rented accommodation delivered through the planning process.</p> |
| 11.5 | Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed | <p>Could the lead member provide an update on the purpose, parameters and processes of the LGA Corporate Peer Review that took place between 18th and 22nd September?</p> <p>Answer:</p> <p>LGA Corporate Peer Challenges are coordinated by the Local Government Association on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The council invited the LGA to carry this out as it has been 5 years since our last full Corporate Peer Challenge and the expectation from government is that these happen on a 5 year cycle.</p> <p>The Corporate Peer Challenge is an effective and well-regarded sector led improvement tool. By bringing together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer peers it provides local authorities with robust, credible challenge and support across five core strategic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local priorities and outcomes • Organisational and place leadership • Governance and culture • Financial planning and management • Capacity for improvement <p>The council will receive a report and come up with an action plan which we will embed into our improvement and transformation work. The LGA will then carry out a progress review 6-8 months after the publication of their report.</p> |
| 11.6 | Question from Councillor Rachel Blake | <p>Could the lead member inform me when residents in Bow East will have their regular food waste collections resume. Residents in my ward and across the borough have spent weeks without collection.</p> <p>Response</p> |

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| | | <p>Collections of food waste had been disrupted over a number of weeks during the summer and we must apologise for the impact on residents. This was due to an increase in absence from sickness and staff taking a backlog of annual leave. We apologise for the level of disruption and inconvenience this has caused.</p> <p>Action is being taken to ensure we have sufficient staff cover to maintain collections, with plans being developed to ensure food and waste services are not disrupted due to staff sickness or leave. Post strike action, we expect to be able to deliver this improvement in service, with improved monitoring and follow up of missed collection.</p> |
| 11.7 | <p>Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain</p> | <p>Could the lead member outline how the council is looking to make Workpath more accessible to the residents of Tower hamlets? It is understood plans are being discussed to redesign the service and move it to the new Town Hall in Whitechapel as part of an efficiency and improvement exercise.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Workpath is accessible to the public via online registration, by face to face and online appointment, via drop-in and via the Residents' Hub at the Town Hall. All the planned Residents Hubs across the borough will be supported by Workpath in the same way.</p> <p>Discussions are underway to move the service to the Town Hall for a variety of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make it easier for residents to access multiple strands of support from one site, including via the Residents Hub. • To reduce the number of council satellite offices and thus reduce service charge costs. • To support officers in partnership working with colleagues. • To help officers feel more integrated with colleagues across the council and have better access to the Town Hall facilities. <p>Along with all council services, Workpath's delivery processes and priorities are being reviewed to ensure they deliver the Mayor's pledges; in this instance to develop the social capital of residents, support young people from all walks of life and young people with specific needs or characteristics including SEND and care experience, supporting women and in particular women from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds who are particularly under-represented in the labour market. Proposals will also consider a programme of in-work progression to help tackle the cost of living crisis, and will focus on specific key themes and growth sectors such as: green skills, tech and creative industries, health and social care and sciences.</p> |

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| | | Currently around 58% of programmes funding is S106 or external contract or commercial funding, and this drive to minimise the use of General Fund will continue. |
| 11.8 | Question from Councillor Amy Lee | <p>Residents are concerned about proposed changes to leisure services and the impact this will have on them. Can the lead member outline plans, for John Orwell Sports Centre and provide reassurance to residents that the service they receive will not diminish?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>There will be a priority to ensure a continuity of service, alongside an improved leisure offer with new services, products, and infrastructure as services are bought back in house. The new service will forge strong links with other council services, public health, and key stakeholders with a focus on improving the health and wellbeing of residents benefiting those hard-to-reach communities, such as BAME women and SEND children, as well as current users.</p> |
| 11.9 | Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled | <p>Following coverage of issues within the council’s housing management service, can the lead member provide an update on what steps have been taken to address outstanding issues and how future issues will be addressed?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Recent media coverage referenced several concerns from staff within the Homelessness Service.</p> <p>The council takes staff wellbeing seriously and acknowledges that the Homelessness Service has experienced significant pressure in previous months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pressure is being felt London-wide. • It is related to an increase in the number of approaches from residents for homelessness assistance due to the cost-of-living crisis, families not being able to continue to house family members and an increase in evictions from private rented homes due to the eviction ban, that was in place during Covid, being lifted. • There is a lack availability of suitable accommodation in and around London. • In quarter 1 this year only 1.9% of the private rentals in London were at LHA rates. |

There are several measures that are in place now to address service pressures and staff wellbeing.

We will continue to monitor service pressures and the impact on staff, and we will adjust service provision in consultation with staff to better meet resident needs and build staff resilience.

Measures in place:

- 22 extra posts being recruited to across the service at all levels to build resilience and extra capacity in the service.
- £600k of ICT investment to consolidate ICT systems, remove bureaucracy, and double entry.
- ICT roadmap identifying improvements that will run in parallel to each other.
- Improved connectivity in the Residents' Hub.
- Quematic queuing system installed in the Residents' Hub.
- Electronic forms to enable signature of legal documents by those in temporary accommodation therefore avoiding a return to the office.
- Revised Homelessness online form now 'live' reducing staff time inputting data.
- Staff wellbeing survey in June 2023 which identified 40 actions to improve staff wellbeing and workflows. These have been actioned with the remaining ones due for action completing end of September 2023
- Re-configuring triage/first point of contact to ensure the best customer service possible and eliminate the failure rate to address a query at first point of contact, reducing long waits for residents and repeat work for staff.
- Increasing the availability of temporary accommodation and private rented accommodation, e.g., the recent poster campaign to attract landlords, followed up by the Landlords Fare on 26th October at the Grocer's Wing.
- Onboarding of new accommodation providers.
- Reaching out to developers and RPs with unsold sale units.

Service Improvement Group meeting every two weeks to address workflows. Staff representatives are invited.

11.10 **Question from Councillor Ayas Miah**

DVLA statistics show that there has been a drop in the number of low emission vehicles registered in the borough in the last year, despite numbers increasing elsewhere in the country. Could the lead member inform me what the borough is doing to increase the uptake of electric/low emission vehicles and explain why this may not be working?

Response

The overall number of low emission vehicles registered in the borough has increased over the past 12 months, maintaining the trends in growth seen over the past 5 years. The council is committed to delivering an ambitious expansion of the electric vehicle charger network and this investment in the charging infrastructure will continue to facilitate further growth in electric vehicle ownership in the borough. The council’s electric vehicle charger programme is informed from demand monitored from existing chargers and new requests submitted via the [dedicated charger request webpage](#)

- Total registered low emission vehicles in Tower Hamlets has shown an increase of 2% in the past year - from 3545 (2022 Q1) to 3610 (2023 Q1).
- One of the key challenges to increasing the uptake of low emission vehicles is the availability of public charging points.
- The council is working on plans for a significant increase in publicly available charging points in the borough.
- There are currently 350 public chargers in Tower Hamlets and the plans are for an additional 2000 chargers over the next three years.
- These include new rapid, fast and standard chargers which will start to be installed in early 2024.

Car Ownership Data

| All registered company vehicles | 2023 Q1 | 2022 Q1 | Change |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| Tower Hamlets | 8980 | 9015 | -35 |

| All registered private vehicles | 2023 Q1 | 2022 Q1 | Change |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| Tower Hamlets | 45566 | 46101 | -535 |

| All registered vehicles | 2023 Q1 | 2022 Q1 | Change |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| Tower Hamlets | 54546 | 55116 | -570 |

11.11 Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Following the momentous launch of free school meals for over 38,000 additional children across tower hamlets - including at secondary level - could the lead member provide an update on what schools, parents and pupils have had to say about the new service?

Response

A successful launch event of universal free school meals for secondary schools in Tower Hamlets took place at Swanlea School, with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and local and national media in attendance.

Ms Brenda Landers, Headteacher at Swanlea, said: 'Fifty per cent of our students used to get free school meals anyway, but this is about the next layer of pupils who we call the working poor, and they are the group that are traditionally not eligible for free school meals that massively struggle to provide their child with a meal. Will having a good meal make students learn better? Yes. Will I ever be able to link it to better GCSEs and A-Levels? Almost certainly not. The children will eat good food and have a hot meal, and that's enough. In a country as wealthy as Britain, no child should be going to bed hungry. It's a disgrace. and this is part of the solution to that.'

Secondary School headteachers have worked effectively in partnership with the Council to deliver the Free School Meals scheme as quickly as possible, and report success in the initial roll out, despite the logistical challenges posed for some schools.

Pupils at Morpeth School have been excited about the initiative. This enthusiasm has led to an increase in the take-up of meals; secondary headteachers at a recent consultative meeting reported a similar trend in their schools. Following the positive feedback from schools, the Council is extending its support to schools over the next few months to deal with minor remaining logistical issues. There have been approximately 30 recorded positive media coverage across national, local, and the sector press.

11.12 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar

Can the lead member confirm:

- Whether all buildings within the LBTH estate have been surveyed for RAAC (including schools)?
- Can he detail the mitigation measures for where RAAC has been found?
- If surveys have not been completed, can he provide a timeline for their completion?

Response

The team are currently reviewing the position in relation to RAAC, which was commonly used in schools and other buildings from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. It is mainly found in flat roofs, although occasionally in floors and walls. The team are

therefore concentrating on buildings in this date range and essentially in its flat roof construction.

In the absence of drawings or other records/data, an initial internal visual inspection will be necessary to establish the roof construction. If found to contain RAAC panels, then a follow up survey will be arranged with a Structural Engineer.

All Local Authority Maintained Schools that were within scope against the DFE Guidance (flat roofs and 1950-1990) were subject to a desktop review and subsequent surveying report.

The guidance has subsequently changed post 31st August 23 with an increase in the impacted years into mid 90's, therefore a review to assess if any further schools are in scope is being undertaken at pace.

RAAC has been identified at one local authority maintained school Seven Mills, the affected area (main hall) has been closed to pupils with alternative spaces within the school being used for impacted activities. A scheme to provide temporary propping to bring the hall back into use whilst undertaking full removal is being undertaken with an anticipated completion date of December 2023.

RAAC has further been identified at two non Local Authority Maintained schools where the borough's children are educated. Mulberry Academy Stepney Green, RAAC is located within the hall which has been cordoned off and temporary arrangements put in place. Stepney All Saints Church of England School- RAAC is located at numerous locations within the site and the DFE changed its advice to the school resulting in closure of the entire site on Thursday 14th September, with the whole school currently using online learning. Mitigation for bringing the whole school back to in person teaching as quickly as possible is being progressed with the DFE.

It is generally understood that RAAC was not used for buildings originally built as residential homes.

There are approximately 244 residential blocks of flats owned by the council that meet the age, height and flat roof criteria for RAAC. THH is not aware that any of these contain RAAC and have not previously identified this when replacing flat roofs to blocks built around this time.

A small number of surveys will be carried out later this year and next year to target those blocks which may have unusual attributes e.g., office block converted to residential.

Further surveys and a programme of testing roof structures is to be planned based on outcome of existing or planned surveying and sampling roof structures and to

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| | | <p>ensure LBTH has account of any buildings at risk of having RAAC within the design.</p> <p>To date no RAAC has been found in LBTH housing stock.</p> |
| 11.13 | <p>Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir</p> | <p>Could the lead member provide an update on the ongoing work to address the service issues outlined in the waste emergency declared by the mayor last year?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The declaration of a waste emergency by the Mayor was a statement of intent to clean up our borough.</p> <p>We have started by redesigning the service from within. Plans are underway to improve management and support of front-line teams, re-design collection routes, to continue with investment in greening our fleet, to focus on recycling improvements, to improve standards of street cleansing and target environmental crime such as fly tipping, litter and graffiti. Our plans also include improvements to our commercial waste service. To include a more flexible and reliable waste and recycling offer that meets the needs of customers, with improved on-line ordering / digital account management.</p> <p>We have re-launched our Find It Fix App and are promoting this widely. This makes it easier to report problems that need action. As we work towards a cleaner borough, it's important for our residents to act as our eyes and ears by reporting street waste using Find It Fix It. We will continue to work with all of our staff and front-line teams to ensure a cleaner and greener future for Tower Hamlets.</p> |
| 11.14 | <p>Question from Councillor Shubo Hussein</p> | <p>What are the future plans for the LBTH community hubs? Residents in Bromley South have been informed that their community hub has been closed as the council decided not to renew the lease.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The implementation of the strategy agreed by the previous administration to secure hub operates and grant leases has been paused pending a review. The only exception to this is Granby Hall. As to the remaining hub the council's strategy has yet to be confirmed.</p> |

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| | | <p>With regards to the Bromley South Community Hub this lease was declined for renewal by Poplar HARCA. An open day/meeting for the previous community groups who were using the site is being arranged.</p> |
| <p>11.15</p> | <p>Question from Councillor Abdul Mannan</p> | <p>Following complaints from across the community about the effectiveness of drug treatment services in the borough, can the lead member outline what is being done to tackle heroin and crack cocaine addiction which has been an issue in Tower Hamlets for so long.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>We have established a World Class System Improvement Group with all Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Provider and wider system partners to deliver and sustain improvement and enhancement in this area. This group will report into the Combatting Drugs Partnership. Chaired by The Director of Public health with oversight of the current challenges and performance, delivery will focus on ensuring more people access treatment and that once they access their treatment journey is successful and results in long terms recovery.</p> <p>Over the last 3 months we have worked with the current treatment Provider to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the numbers accessing treatment services, from 1800 to 1950 with an aim to increase this to 2300 by the end of the financial year. • Reduced the length of time that people wait to begin treatment from 6 weeks to 6 days. • Reduced the caseloads carried by staff at the treatment service to improve the access into services. <p>Over the next 3 months we are focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the outcomes for individuals and their overall effectiveness of services • Enhancing our recovery services, commissioning a community based culturally appropriate recovery service by January of 2024. • Delivery of a rapid prescribing model • Increasing our community-based resource for treatment and recovery • Introduction of an Assessment Team – to speed up assessment and prescription at the “front door”. • Introduction of Buvidal as a new form of treatment • Deploying additional capacity for engagement and outreach |

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| 11.16 | Question from Councillor Asma Begum | <p>Over the past months residents in this borough have spent weeks without their bins being collected, could the lead member tell me whether specific measures are being taken to clear the backlog of missed collections?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>We have seen an increase in complaints in July and August linked to service disruption. This is largely due to increased numbers of staff on annual leave, or absent due to sickness. We have worked to clear reported missed collections as quickly as possible, but some areas have experienced longer delays clearing any backlogs. Action was taken to deploy additional resources to clear missed collections, but strike action has disrupted this work. Our improvement plans cover service re-design, improved resource planning, performance management, supervision and quality control. We are working to improve the use of our missed collection reporting and performance management system, combined with plans to improve management of staff absence, reducing use of agency staff.</p> |
| 11.17 | Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan | <p>Following on from the administration’s motion, could the lead member explain how the council pursues best value when disposing of council owned assets?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Council adheres to best value by following the process laid out within the clearly laid out “Property Procedures for Disposals and Lettings.”</p> <p>The Procedure is available at agenda item 6.9 here: https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=720&MId=10191</p> |
| 11.18 | Question from Councillor Rebakah Sultana | <p>A recent study found that young women in tower hamlets are four times more likely to be hospitalised for self-harm than their Male counterparts – could the lead member inform me whether there are any specific programmes or workstreams concerned with women’s mental health?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The Tower Hamlets Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-2026 has an aim to reduce self-harm as a risk factor for suicide, and priority actions to address this aim.</p> <p>Increasing access to services where people can receive support with emotional needs related to self-harm is a key aim of our Strategy and we have commissioned a range of services that provide support for women in their mental health:</p> |

- **East London Foundation Trust** has a range of services to support mental health and wellbeing including:
 - Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies for people with depression and/or anxiety;
 - Crisis services (24/7 crisis telephone line, crisis emergency response team, home treatment team, crisis therapy service)
 - Tower Hamlets Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
 - Tower Hamlets Early Detection Service and Tower Hamlets Early Intervention Service

- **The Safe Connections Community Hub** is delivered by Mind, telephone-based tailored support for people 18+ to access if experiencing suicidal ideation or self-harm
- **Together Café** (drop in service for people at risk of mental health crisis to attend out of hours.
- **Mind Community Connections** : information, advice and support delivered to people experiencing mental health issues, delivering a range of recovery and service user led programmes including those for women at risk of self-harm. They also offer access to the Sakina project – funded through National MIND to support access and engagement for diverse Muslim women in the borough.
- **Recovery college; delivered by ELFT**, offer a range of training and sessions focused on educating and raising awareness around mental health. The recovery college has previously offered specific programmes for women including a Somali Women’s Cooking Workshop – sessions to be delivered in both Somali and English, and also, ‘Women in Islam’ for Bengali Women.
- **Kooth** is a free and anonymous online community that supports individuals with mental health and wellbeing. Contributions to the community are made by writing stories and creative work, as well as taking part in community discussions, and you can also chat live with mental health professionals who are available 365 days a year.

Additional actions include increasing awareness and adoption of the best practice guidance among organisations and partners across Tower Hamlets (i.e., the 2022 NICE Guidelines for Assessment, Management and Preventing Recurrence) as well as promoting the uptake of funded training opportunities about how to support people who self-harm (offered by Tower Hamlets Community Education Provider Network).

Note:

Between April 2019 and March 2023, there were 3,300 incidents of self-harm attendances to A&E by 2,500 distinct patients in Tower Hamlets. These incidents

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| | | <p>have been decreasing each quarter since the start 2022. The highest rate of self-harm attendances to A&E is among people aged 13-19 years old, 55.4% were female patients while 44.6% were male. This variation appears to be mainly among people 24 years old and younger: females make up 64% of attendances and males make up 36% of attendances for this age group.</p> |
| 11.19 | <p>Question from Councillor Harun Miah</p> | <p>The Mayor has overseen several housing away days. Could the lead member explain what progress has been made in these sessions, and how it will help to tackle the ongoing issue of overcrowding in the borough?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The Mayor holds Housing Awaydays with a number of officers working on delivering rented homes for the Council. The meetings afford the opportunity for the Mayor and Lead Member to work closely and in detail with the Chief Executive and officers to identify development opportunities and to monitor progress on existing schemes. Particular attention is given to increasing the number of larger homes to reduce overcrowding.</p> |
| 11.20 | <p>Question from Councillor Amina Ali</p> | <p>Could the lead member provide an update on the progress of operation continuum? Since 2022 how many operation continuum events have taken place?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Operation Continuum is the Council's close partnership with the Police to tackle the sale and supply of drugs. Since its inception in Dec 2017, it has been successful in tackling the supply of drugs and is responsible for securing the successful Addiction Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement, Recovery (ADDER) funding and Programme. This Programme is now rolled out by the Met Police as best practice across London.</p> <p>OP Continuum 2022/23 to date has led to 18 days of action resulting in: 114 Warrants have been executed, 112 people arrested and 72 charged with drugs trafficking offences, £200,000 cash seized and 347 weapons recovered.</p> <p>In addition, we are focussed on drugs addresses and venues involved in sale and supply. Recently resulting in several premises closures in the area of Commercial Street. A number of warrants have been conducted recently which resulted in a large quantity of drugs seized and Closure notices issued for properties.</p> <p><i>Footnote for information</i> <i>The force is unable to release the data for the total number of drugs related arrests and drugs trafficking charges due to the roll out of their new IT</i></p> |

system Connect in Nov. Between April and November there have been 712 arrests for drugs supply related offences, an average of 3 a day.

11.21 **Question from Councillor James King**

Over the summer concerned parents contacted Labour councillors because they were informed that the council was withdrawing funding from district sports teams and their children could no longer attend sessions – could the lead member confirm whether the council did withdraw funding from sports clubs in the borough, if so why and if not then commit to investigate as to why some parents believed this to be the case?

Response

The funding for the district sport programme came to an end at the start of the financial year in April 2023. Considering the significant savings that need to be made, The Council is currently reviewing the school sport offer, including the district sport programme, and how it can be effectively delivered in the future. The Council is extremely ambitious for young people and sport in the borough.

It has invested £13.7 million in Youth Services, which will be offering an exciting youth sport curriculum. The Council is also investing in sport & leisure by bringing its leisure service in house and rebuilding St. George's Leisure Centre, all of which will involve exciting opportunities for young people to be actively involved in sport and physical activity. In addition, Government has made considerable financial contributions to school sport via the PE Sport Premium, School Games, and other funding streams. Consequently, there may be more appropriate, innovative, and exciting ways to deliver district sport in the future, through existing investments being made.

Unfortunately, it appears that there has been some confusion with parents about this issue. Sports clubs are not responsible for the delivery of the district sport programme and The Council has not withdrawn funding from sports clubs

11.22 **Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Could the lead member for community safety inform me whether the council is aware of the frequent disruption residents in Wapping are facing from young men choosing to use the streets of the borough as a race circuit – often these illegal race meets leave nitrous oxide canisters littering the street. Could the lead member meet with me to discuss the installation of speed humps/noise monitoring equipment as a means of getting to grips with the issue?

Response

The council is aware of these issues being faced by residents in Wapping. The Council has very limited legal powers to deal with vehicle nuisance. These are

police powers. We work in partnership with the Police and are providing support to them to reduce the problem and the impact on residents.

Speeding and traffic enforcement is the responsibility of the Police and TFL under their "Vision Zero" policy. The council assists the local Police where possible in carrying out this work.

We have purchased three handheld speed guns and recently had them calibrated for use by the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Local officers are being trained in their use to enable them to use them across the borough, and key locations such as Wapping.

Standard speed cameras that are approved to enforce by issuing fines and points are only installed by the Police and TFL in response to a serious accidents.

Dangerous driving has to be witnessed by a Police Officer or through footage showing the registration number for action to be taken. Nuisance driving can be dealt with in several ways depending on the severity but only the police have the power to act on this.

In relation to loud vehicles and modified exhausts, unfortunately noise made by vehicles is exempt from the Environmental Protection Act. The only legislation that covers this issue is the "Road Vehicles (Construction and Use Regulations) 1986" There are two sections in this legislation which cover the noise issue:

- Silencer/ exhaust system altered to increase noise – Reg. 54(2) The Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986.
- Avoidance of excessive noise – Reg. 97 The Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986

Again, this is something only the Police can legitimately deal with. We understand that it requires specially mechanically trained Police Officers to stop and deal with the vehicle.

The Met Police have a Traffic Team who specialist in dealing with nuisance vehicles and drivers (NVT). This team all specialize in traffic offences, and most officers are also mechanically trained to be able to inspect vehicles for modifications. Last month we signed off a local agreement and provided some funding for them to carry out additional work in Tower Hamlets in the form of evening patrols and major ANPR operations to target problem vehicles that are impacting on our resident's quality of life. To date they have carried out three patrol type operations and one large operation - predominately focused in Wapping to deal with the "car meets" and

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| | | <p>vehicle racing. So far, over 150 sec 59 notices have been issued by the NVT during these operations.</p> <p>Working with the police traffic team has highlighted the ability to use legislation called a "Section 59 Notice " Police Reform Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk) This legislation can be used by local Police Officers and PCSOs to deal with nuisance vehicles. We have arranged for a training session to be carried out by the traffic team to provide our local police officers with more knowledge about the S59 notice and when it can be used.</p> <p>We encourage residents and councillors to access the below link to formally report nuisance vehicles to the Metropolitan Police. It allows residents to upload evidence of nuisance vehicles so they can assess it and take follow up action as necessary. We are encouraging residents to utilise this function wherever possible. Vehicle nuisance involving cars, bikes and mopeds Metropolitan Police</p> <p>We are working with the Highways Team to carry out an assessment of the key locations in Wapping to assess the need and options for dealing with nuisance vehicles through changes in the road layouts at the location.</p> |
| 11.23 | <p>Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed</p> | <p>Could the lead member confirm whether GLL is cancelling reciprocal arrangements ahead of schedule for residents in this borough ahead of leisure services coming in house – residents in the borough have been in touch with me over the summer to say that they were denied access to other GLL facilities.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>GLL still operate the contract until 31st April 2024 and so their memberships that are all inclusive and remain so.</p> <p>We have developed a business plan that allows residents who have a membership to use any of the facilities across the borough, however after May 1st 2024 will no longer be able to access other GLL facilities. Residents of Tower Hamlets will also receive a discount for membership or pay as you go sessions. The new service will forge strong links with other council services, public health, and key stakeholders with a focus on improving the health and wellbeing of residents benefiting those hard-to-reach communities, such as BAME women and SEND children, as well as current users.</p> |
| 11.24 | <p>Question from Councillor</p> | <p>Tower Hamlets has coped much better than other London boroughs from cuts to local government funding because of business rate income it collected from Canary Wharf's banks and services. Home to 30 office buildings and 120,000 office workers.</p> |

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| | <p>Sabina Khan</p> | <p>Office workers socialise Canary Wharf buildings. The area has more than 300 retailers as well as eight supermarkets more than 70 restaurants and bars, and a cinema. There is a big exodus coming from Canary Wharf now. High profile businesses are moving out of Canary Wharf, in July 2023 HSBC said it's moving its global headquarters out of Canary Wharf tower and to the city of London the Dockland has one of the highest office vacancy rate in London at 15.5 percentage, according to data provider Costar.</p> <p>What is council doing to retain and attract global businesses in Canary Wharf? Has the council modelled scenarios or planned for further exits from Canary Wharf and assessed whether there are risks to the council and residents?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>While Canary Wharf will continue to play an important role in the economy of Tower Hamlets (and London and the UK) by providing a range of office spaces, through the development of our new Local Plan, we are seeking to support increased flexibility to allow new types of uses into the area.</p> <p>We are also supporting high-density residential development around the fringes of Canary Wharf, including in Wood Wharf, which is evolving into a mixed-use community. The increased residential presence around the Canary Wharf estate will support the shops, cafes and restaurants and allow the estate to play more of a town centre role for the people living on the Isle of Dogs.</p> |
| <p>11.25</p> | <p>Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam</p> | <p>Will the Mayor be able to update me on the ongoing negotiations between himself and TfL regarding LIP and any other funding that is being withheld from the borough?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>There is ongoing discussion between officers and TfL representatives on the detail of LIP allocation for LBTH, I have arranged meeting with senior officials with TfL that is due to take place in October 2023.</p> |
| <p>11.26</p> | <p>Question from Councillor Peter Golds</p> | <p>Residents in many parts of the Isle of Dogs including Lockesfield Place, Masthouse Terrace, Midland Estate, Livingstone Place and Crews Street have, in a short period, registered a significant number of complaints about the collection of food and organic waste. All to no avail, despite logging them via the website and the telephone systems.</p> <p>Will the Mayor give an assurance that this problem will be resolved?</p> |

Response

We have seen an increase in complaints in July and August linked to service disruption. This is largely due to increased numbers of staff on annual leave, or absent due to sickness. We have worked to clear reported missed collections as quickly as possible, but some areas have experienced longer delays clearing any backlogs. Action was taken to deploy additional resources to clear missed collections, but strike action has disrupted this work. Our improvement plans cover service re-design, improved resource planning, performance management, supervision and quality control. We are working to improve the use of our missed collection reporting and performance management system, combined with plans to improve management of staff absence, reducing use of agency staff. Post strike action we expect to deliver improved monitoring and follow up of missed collection complaints. We are working to ensure our customer care, communication and complaint follow improves.

11.27 Question from Councillor Nathalie Bienfait

Could data be provided on how many homes in Tower Hamlets fail the Decent Homes Standard, split by ward?

Response

Data is not available for the number of homes that fail the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by ward. Whilst not disaggregated at ward level, the English Housing Survey highlights that across Tower Hamlets 13.9% of all rented homes were classified as non-decent compared to 15.3% across Waltham Forest, 14.7% in Hackney and 14.2% in Southwark. It also highlights that the private rented sector has slightly higher proportions of non-decent homes across all LAs while the social rented sector had the lowest.

Decent Homes Standard is currently only applicable to the social housing sector and the government has committed to review the Decent Homes Standard and to extend it to the private rented sector, as stated in the Renters (Reform) Bill (2023)

The council has a range of means of using the above information and more local sources of information which relate specifically to DHS within its own housing stock and other housing providers and across the private rented sector.

- THH

THH uses an external independent survey company that conducts stock condition surveys (SCS) on a rolling five-yearly basis. The SCS covers external and communal areas of buildings and internal surveys on a per-block basis. The SCSs

identify any defective elements of buildings such as roofs, rainwater and foul water drainage and this information is used to prioritise and plan stock investment.

- THHF

Tower Hamlets Housing Forum is a partnership between the council and the main Registered Providers with stock in the borough. A key aim of the Forum is to raise housing management standards across the borough. As part of its governance structure there is an Asset Management subgroup whose focus is to examine and report on the condition of existing stock and ensure Providers are up to date with existing and emerging legislation affecting the condition of their homes and estates and are taking the appropriate steps to rectify any highlighted shortcomings identified.

- Social Housing Regulation

Working groups have been established within THH and across THHF to meet provisions contained within the Social Housing Regulation Act which has a key focus around housing conditions and decent homes. The Act will enable a new proactive approach to regulating social housing landlords, by ensuring better homes for those who live in social housing, greater transparency for tenants - with the Regulator able to intervene where social landlords fail to meet expected standards – fundamentally, it intends to drive reform to change landlord's behaviour.

As part of the new regulatory regime introduced by the RSH, RPs will be expected to report on the number of homes classified as non-decent on an annual basis. This data will be collected and reported to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee on a six-monthly basis to ensure Members are kept abreast of the how RPs are progressing whilst providing opportunity to challenge underperformance and maintain oversight of the issues impacting service delivery to residents.

- PRS

The council operates various types of licensing schemes across the borough (Mandatory, Additional and Selective) to ensure that private landlords, and the properties that they let do not pose a risk to the welfare or safety of persons occupying the property.

We also have developed a Private Renters Charter which sets out standards that the law demands from all private landlords and agents. These standards include aspects such as: deposit protection, fair tenancy, ban on tenant fee's, gas safety and free from damp and mould to name a few.

- Housing Enforcement


The council has a duty to review local housing conditions and identify appropriate action that may be required across properties which may be hazardous.

Following a service request or complaint about poor housing conditions from any resident within the private or social rented sector, council officers will undertake a review with an initial risk assessment will normally be carried out. The council will take further action to deal with health and safety concerns or issues which cause a statutory nuisance. While being proportionate in our response to illegal activity and

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| <p>would prefer to resolve issues informally, if possible, where landlords do not engage with us or there is a blatant disregard for the law putting the safety of tenants at risk enforcement action is taken to ensure statutory health and safety concerns are remediated.</p> |
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Agenda Item 5

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| Non-Executive Report of the: Council 15 th November 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Petitions to Council | |

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| Originating Officer(s) | Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services |
| Wards affected | All wards |

SUMMARY

1. This report sets out details of the valid petitions submitted for presentation and debate at this Council meeting. The text of the petitions received are set out in the attached report.
2. The Council's Constitution provides for up to four petitions to be heard at each ordinary Council meeting. These are taken in order of receipt, except that petitions for debate (those in excess of 2,000 signatures) will take precedence. Should more than four petitions be received, all remaining petitions will be listed to be formally noted by Council.
 - a. There are three petition to be heard:
 - Public Space Protection Order to ban nuisance vehicles
 - Refund fund for missed waste collections;
 - Tower Hamlets Housing Allocation System for Single People
 - b. There are no petitions to be debated or noted.

PETITIONS TO BE HEARD

3. For Petitions listed as to be heard:
 - a. Petitioners may address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
 - b. Members may then question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
 - c. Finally, the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the petition for up to 2 minutes. The petition will then be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will provide a written response within 28 days of the date of the meeting.
4. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.
5. Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.

5.1 Petition requesting Public Space Protection Order to ban nuisance vehicles.

Statement

We the undersigned petition the council to The Council currently has no powers and the Police only limited powers to stop vehicles being used to commit anti-social behaviour. We request the Mayor to introduce a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to allow the Police and Council to deal with nuisance vehicles more effectively. Whether they are tunnel running through the Borough, revving their car engines in the early hours or delivery riders riding on pavements as they rush to deliver food, they all cause disruption, noise, and danger to residents. The Council also needs to consider other changes to deter nuisance vehicles.

The Council currently has no powers to stop the use of vehicles (cars, motorbikes, and motor scooters) being used to cause anti-social behaviour. The Police have only very limited powers and none at the scene of an incident if the vehicle is in good working order. A Public Space Protection Order would give them the power to issue fines to vehicle drivers and enforce behaviour change.

Examples of nuisance vehicles include (but are not limited to);

- Cars revving their engines early in morning next to people's homes
- Racing cars on residential streets
- Revving engines in road tunnels underneath people's homes late at night
- Blocking traffic on A roads and slowing down emergency vehicles like they do in Westferry Circus so that they can perform stunts;
- Being used as the base for parties or social events late at night next to people's homes;
- Racing through tunnels at night, revving engines to create noise for those who live above the tunnels;
- Stopping in tunnels to release smoke flares which then reduce visibility for other drivers;
- Delivery drivers driving on pavements or pedestrian bridges to save themselves time but risking accidents while they do so

This behaviour either causes noise that disrupts residents usually late at night, obstructs traffic on public roads and/or is a danger to residents and visitors. This happens across Tower Hamlets so any PSPO should be for the whole Borough.

Councils like Newham and Dartford both have Vehicle Nuisance PSPOs to help control ASB, we should too.

In addition, the Council should also look at other physical changes to discourage these drivers. For example:

- The use of noise cameras that can record video or pictures of vehicles making noise
- Speed bumps on residential streets like Cassilis
- Changes in parking layout inside Westferry Circus so that stopping is also a parking offence for most of the roundabout

This Petition ran from 31/08/2023 to 12/10/2023 and has now finished.

707 people signed this Petition.

5.2 Petition requesting Refund fund for missed waste collections

Statement

We the undersigned petition the council to All areas in Tower Hamlets have been affected by missed rubbish and recycling collections this summer. We demand that an appropriate refund be given to all Council Tax payers, paid for by the compensation that Veolia must have paid to LBTH.

Council Tax payers have not received part of the service they have paid for. Accordingly, they should receive a refund.

This Petition ran from 07/09/2023 to 19/10/2023 and has now finished.

83 people signed this Petition.

5.3 Tower Hamlets Housing Allocation System for Single People


Statement

This petition seeks to prevent any further deaths, following the fatal fire in Shadwell, by demanding changes to Tower Hamlets Housing Allocation System so that single people, who currently have little or no hope of being housed in safe, secure social accommodation, are treated more fairly.

This is a paper petition received 25/10/23.

50 people signed this Petition.

Agenda Item 7

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| Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 15 th November 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Motion for debate submitted by the Administration | |

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| Originating Officer(s) | Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services |
| Wards affected | All wards |

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one specific Motion submitted by the Administration. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. The Administration Motion is submitted by the Aspire Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

ADMINISTRATION MOTION FOR DEBATE – MOTION ON THE LOCAL PLAN

Motion Proposed by: Cllr Kabir Ahmed

Seconded by: Cllr Abu Talha Chowdhury

This Council notes:

- That overcrowding in the borough had been left unchecked from the years 2015 to 2022, with over 14,000 residents now classified as living in acutely overcrowded conditions.
- That the development of new, affordable homes for rent has not kept pace with the rapid population growth and concomitant rise in said overcrowding, with some years during the period 2015-2022 seeing as little as 140 homes completed in a single year^[1].
- That the development of affordable housing has always played a central role of critical importance to Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his team, who delivered thousands of affordable, social homes for rent during his previous administrations.
- That this commitment has continued into this current administration's first term, with at least 4,000 affordable homes for rent pledged to be delivered, and over 1,000 already built or in the pipeline.
- That the Council's current Local Plan is due for a refresh, with the first version of this refreshed Plan – regulation 18 – passing through Cabinet on 25th October 2023.

This Council believes:

- That the delivery of affordable rented homes has slowed over the past seven years.
- That restrictive policies have prevented a greater number of affordable homes from being built, due to a limitation on height, density and the percentage of affordable units that must be delivered per development, alongside the tenure mix between affordable rented homes and intermediate properties.
- That the previous local plan was not ambitious enough to meet the growing demand for affordable and sustainable housing in Tower Hamlets.
- That the current proposed refresh will revolutionise and expedite the way that affordable housing is delivered in the years to come, tackling the overcrowding crisis at a much greater pace and providing decent, affordable homes to the residents of Tower Hamlets.
- That this is demonstrated in the proposed commitment to raising the affordable housing criteria expected of developers from the existing 35% threshold to a more ambitious 40%; a redressing of the 70:30 affordable/ intermediate split of this 40% to a revised 85:15 ratio – guaranteeing more *genuinely* affordable homes for residents; and through the prioritisation of the development of 3 and 4 bedroom properties to accommodate the growing family-sized population of the borough.


- That this refreshed Local Plan will see height and density prioritised to help maximise the delivery of affordable housing, with the whole borough becoming a Tall Building Zone (TBZ) where this does not impact on cultural or heritage conservation areas. This will include a pushing of the maximum building height threshold to 23 storeys.
- That this refreshed Local Plan will be a catalyst for further social and economic development for all residents, as well as protecting and enhancing the borough's local environment and green spaces.
- That this refreshed Local Plan will respect, enhance and incorporate heritage and conservation areas into all new developments.
- That this refreshed Local Plan should be made accessible to all residents in the borough – regardless of language, race or background – to ensure that a fair and holistic engagement process is ensured, and all resident voices are heard.

This Council resolves:

- To support and promote engagement with the Regulation 18 version of the refreshed local plan for all residents.
- To work with the BME media to help promote this engagement.
- To commend the Lead Member and Officers for their hard work in capturing the ambition of this administration regarding housebuilding within the document.
- To request regular updates on the journey of the refreshed Local Plan through the relevant stages of its progression.

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Agenda Item 8

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| Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 15 th November 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group | |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Originating Officer(s) | Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services |
| Wards affected | All wards |

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one Motion submitted by an Opposition Group. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, submission of the Opposition Motion for Debate will alternate in sequence between the opposition groups. This Opposition Motion is submitted by the Labour Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

OPPOSITION MOTION FOR DEBATE – MORE SUPPORT FOR THE INFORMATION AND ADVICE SECTOR

Proposed by: Cllr Mufeedah Bustin

Seconded by: Cllr Sabina Akhtar

This council notes:

1. The voluntary sector in Tower Hamlets provides critical support to our residents, particularly in times of crisis.
2. The council's support of the information and advice sector is unique: many council's have reduced grants for this vital service.
3. Despite government funding reducing by over £200M in 10 years, the previous administration continued to invest in the information and advice sector, providing £900,000pa per year to the advice consortium from 2018-2023.
4. The 2021 LBTH Poverty Review identified the impact of multiple factors effecting residents' livelihoods, including the pandemic, a reduced welfare state and Brexit.
5. The Cost of Living crisis, high inflation and increasing interest rates, as well as the increasing cost of rents, is having a detrimental impact on the livelihoods of Tower Hamlets residents.
6. The Poverty Review also identified the important of local intervention in creating a safety net, in particular:
"To make the biggest practical difference to residents, we recommend that the council works in partnership with other organisations and the community to achieve a step change....." through "early financial intervention - taking a whole systems approach to increasing incomes, reducing costs, and averting financial crisis and homelessness"
7. That the 2023 Mayor's Community Fund has not increased the budgetary allocation for information and advice. Inflation means this is in effect a budgetary reduction, meaning reduced support for our residents.

This council further believes:


8. That the information and advice sector is experiencing an increased demand on its services as more and more people are seeking support and advice on a range of matters.
9. That this demand will increase significantly once the rollout of Universal Credit is fully implemented in the next 12 months.
10. That cross-organisation initiatives such as Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network (THCAN) provides efficiencies of scale, training and up to date welfare information, as well as resource sharing across the sector.

11. THCAN also maintains the digital referral system which allows organisations and individuals to refer cases to advisors which reduces waiting times and ensure urgent issues can be dealt with, preventing residents from experiencing crises and destitution.
12. This is not the time to be reducing support to the information and advice sector, and the council should, instead be increasing support.

This council resolves:

13. To call on Mayor Lutfur Rahman and the Lead Member to review the allocation of funding to the information and advice sector and THCAN with a view to increasing it and ensuring ongoing support.

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| Decision Report Council 15 November 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: (Cover report of Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services) Main Report of Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Updated Member / Officer Relations Protocol | |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Wards affected | All Wards |
|-----------------------|-----------|

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


- 1.1 Since agreeing a new Member Code of Conduct, the Standards Advisory Committee have been reviewing and updating the Member / Officer Relations Protocol.
- 1.2 At their meeting on 22 June 2023, the Committee agreed the new version and, subject to minor changes and then consultation with the political groups, agreed that the updated Protocol should be presented to Council for adoption.
- 1.3 The minor changes were made and the consultation with political groups has now taken place.
- 1.4 This report therefore asks Council to consider the Protocol for Adoption.
- 1.5 On agreement the Protocol will be added to the Council's Constitution.
- 1.6 The report to Standards Advisory Committee is appended to this Cover Report alongside the new Member / Officer Relations Protocol. (Note that the Protocol presented here has had minor updates, agreed with the Chair, since consideration at that meeting but before consultation with the groups.)

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Review and agree to adopt the revised Member / Officer Relations Protocol.
2. Agree that the updated Protocol be added to the Council's Constitution.

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| Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory 22 June 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Constitution Review – Members/Officer Relations’ Protocol | |

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Originating Officer(s) | Agnes Adrien, Head of Litigation |
| Wards affected | (All Wards); |

Executive Summary

Standards Advisory Committee on 4 February 2021 agreed to review the Member/Officer Relations’ Protocol. Since then the DMO has consulted with the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee. The outcome is reflected in the draft updated Member protocol of the report attached to this report at Appendix A. This report seeks the views of the Standards Advisory Committee on the draft updated protocol.

Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the draft updated Member /Officer Protocol.
2. Authorise the Monitoring Office in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to make any changes to the protocol arising from the review in paragraph 1.
3. Authorise the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair to make any further changes deemed necessary.

1. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The Standards Advisory Committee has a role in overseeing standards in relation to how Members and officers interact with each other. It is therefore appropriate for the Committee to consider and review the existing protocol.

2. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee may make any suggestions it deems appropriate for consideration by the Monitoring Officer

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Member / Officer Relations Protocol in Part C of the Council's Constitution sets out the parameters through which Members and Officers should engage with each other through their roles.
- 3.2 It deals with a large number of issues including general conduct, decision making, use of resources and day to day contact.
- 3.3 The Protocol also includes a section setting out how Members should interact with each other and the basic standards expected.
- 3.4 The Standards Advisory Committee has a role in monitoring Member standards including how Members interact with each other and with officers.
- 3.5 As the draft updated Protocol has been reviewed since the last Committee meeting on 18 April 2023, e.g including the use of similar headings to the Members Code of Conduct, the Committee is being asked to review and comment on it and to authorise the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to make any further changes to the protocol arising from the review.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee should consider the extent to which the Protocol supports equality of opportunity and engagement for all Members and officers including any impact on protected characteristics

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
 - Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 None

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Members/Officer protocol set out at Part 3, section 32 Constitution forms part of the Council's ethical framework and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Constitution, the Code of Conduct for Members, disciplinary codes which regulate the conduct of officers and other relevant codes and guidance.
- 7.2 Paragraph 11 of the Protocol specifies that the Standards Advisory Committee and the Monitoring Officer will jointly keep this Protocol under review, taking place on an annual basis, and make recommendations for changes as appropriate
- 7.3 As part of this process the report requests that the Committee review the amended protocol set out in Appendix 1 to the report and make any comment as appropriate for the Monitoring Officer to consider in accordance with this process.
- 7.4 The Committee should pay regard to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) and its obligations to equality and diversity in facilitating and/or discharging the business of the Council including the extent to which have informed the protocol and any proposed revisions to it as part of the Committee's review.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Current Member / officer relations protocol

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

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Appendix A

32 Member / Officer Relations' Protocol

CONTENTS

| Section | Subject |
|---------|--|
| 1 | Introduction and Purpose of the Protocol |
| 2 | Roles of Members and Officers |
| 3 | The Relationship between Members and Officers |
| | |
| | The Protocol |
| A | Respect |
| B | Bullying, harassment and discrimination |
| C | Impartiality and accountability of officers of the Council |
| D | Confidentiality and access to information (including Members Enquiries) |
| E | Disrepute |
| F | Use of Position |
| G | Use of Local Authority resources and facilities (including Political Assistants) |
| H | Interests |
| I | Complying with the Protocol |
| | |

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Protocol

- 1.1 Members and officers must work effectively together with mutual respect to achieve the shared purpose of improving the lives of residents. Together, both bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective public sector organisation. Members provide a democratic mandate to the Council, whereas officers contribute the professional expertise needed to advise and deliver on the policy framework agreed by Members.
- 1.2 The protocol has been developed to support high standards of leadership and performance of members and officers. It explains and supports the working relationship between Members and officers, clarifies expectations of each other and shows how to apply the principles of the codes of conduct in practical situations. It contains interpretation and guidance on some of the issues which commonly arise but is not meant to be exhaustive. If in doubt,

members and officers are advised to seek further advice as outlined in the protocol below.

- 1.3 This protocol is part of the Council's governance arrangements and should be read together with the Council's Constitution, the Code of Conduct for Members and Employee Code of Conduct which provide guidance or obligations which Members and officers must consider. They regulate the conduct of others and other relevant codes of guidance.
- 1.4 The Protocol applies to
 - a. the Mayor, elected Members and Co-opted members of the Council (collectively referred to as Member(s) in the remainder of this document). The Protocol applies at all times when Members act in their capacity as Members (or claim to act or give the impression of acting in that capacity). The protocol also applies to officers, meaning all persons employed by the Council whether full or part time; fixed term contract; agency or consultant staff.
 - b. Officers when they encounter Members in day to day roles eg when receiving an urgent or routine Members Enquiry, working with Members in the preparation of committee reports attending committee meetings, liaising on a policy update. This Protocol will apply to each of those occasions. It cannot cover every matter which will arise in council life, but it reflects an approach and serves as a guide to dealing with other issues.
 - c. It is expected that Associates from partnership organisations, where their organisation has no code of conduct, will abide by the principles of Tower Hamlet's code and this protocol.
- 1.5 It is recognised that there may be differences of opinion between members and officers. Ideally, these differences will be resolved amicably.
- 1.6 A Member in need of support and advice about the application of this Protocol should contact the Monitoring Officer. An officer in need of support and advice about the application of this Protocol should contact their line manager in the first instance.
- 1.7 A failure to adhere to the guidance set out in this protocol may lead to action under the Code of Conduct for members or the Employee Code of Conduct for officers as appropriate. (See also Section 12 below).

2. ROLES OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Members

- 2.1 As referred to in Part A of the Council's constitution, as a Member in undertaking my role:
- a) I am a policy-maker and carry out a number of strategic functions;
 - b) I represent my community and I am the advocate of and for my community;
 - c) I effectively represent the interests of my ward and of individual constituents;
 - d) I respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially;
 - e) I participate in the governance of the Council;
 - f) I make myself available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
 - g) I maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics

Officers

- 2.2 As an Officer in undertaking my role:
- a) I am employed by and I am accountable to the Council.
 - b) With the exception of Political Assistants and the Mayor's Assistant, I work to the instructions of my senior officers, not individual Members or Political Groups.
 - c) I manage and provide the Council's services within the responsibilities delegated to me including the effective management of employees and operational issues.
 - d) I have a duty to keep Members of all political groups including Independents fully informed about developments of significance in relation to council activities. (See also section 6 below)
 - e) I have a duty to make ward Members and portfolio holders aware of council activities or council related activities within their wards or relevant to their portfolio.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

- 3.1 Local Authorities exist to improve the lives of the residents in the borough. Members and officers strive to achieve this. However, when there is miscommunication and things go wrong, it can detract from this common goal. Members and officers should have a relationship that instils mutual trust and respect. Members and officers should understand and respect each other's roles and responsibilities. These should be reflected in the behaviour and attitude of each to the other, both publicly and privately.

General Expectations of Conduct

- 3.2 Everyone in public office at all levels; who serve the public or deliver public services, including Members and local authority officers; should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2> also known as the Nolan Principles . The Nolan Principles are set out in Appendix A of the Members Code of Conduct
- 3.3 This section sets out the obligations and the common aims of both members and officers which should assist in achieving the aim of making things better for the population of the borough.

Member / Officer Relations Protocol

A- Respect

4. As Members and officers we should:

a) respect each other's non-working time and not make contact during non-working time, except in emergencies.

b) be courteous to each other at all times even if we disagree strongly with their respective views. We should not shout or raise our voices in an aggressive or rude manner.

c) seek support and advice from and / or raise concerns with the relevant person in the event of disputes. (See also Section 12 below).

d) recognise that we have a duty to raise any issues where we have reason to think that fraud/ probity, corruption or malpractice of any sort is involved within the Council. (See also Section 12 below)

B. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

5. As Members and officers we:

a) do not bully any person

b) do not harass any person

c) promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour.

As a Member:

a) I should not criticise officers in public. (See also Section 6 below)

b) If I have a concern about an officer or specific Council services then this should be made to the Director of the service or to the Chief Executive where it involves a Director personally. (See also Section 12 below)

5.1 Poor working relations between Members and officers can be destructive to good governance.

5.2 Bullying behaviour may happen only once or it may be part of a pattern of behaviour directed at a weaker person or person whom the Member or the officer has some actual or perceived influence over. Such behaviour may include attacking a specific officer's conduct in public when Officers are

instructed not to 'answer back' in public. This can be contrasted with the legitimate challenges which a Member or officer can make in challenging policy or scrutinising performance.

C. Impartiality and accountability of officers of the Council

6. As Members and officers we:

a) Acknowledge the importance of maintaining the impartiality of officers

Officer Accountability

6.1 As an officer I:

- **Will provide advice and proposals based on evidence and consider alternative options in an even-handed way regardless of my own personal views.**
- **Will provide information and advice to all Members regardless of political group (including independents) about developments of significance on council activities.**
- **Will ensure all Members, regardless of political group (including independents), are supported to undertake their council work as appropriate.**
- **I am accountable to my Corporate Director and whilst I should always seek to assist a Member, I must not go beyond the bounds of whatever authority they have been given by their Corporate Director.**
- **If I am uncertain of the appropriate action to take, I should seek the advice of my line manager or my Corporate Director.**
- **I must provide clear evidence based reports setting out all relevant factors for the decision maker, and examine all alternatives in an even handed way in accordance with agreed guidance, protocols and procedures. (See section 6 for further information about Reports).**
- **I have a duty to keep Members of all political groups including Independents fully informed about developments of significance in relation to council activities.**

Accountability of Members and officers

- 6.2 Members should raise constituents' queries or concerns through the proper channels and not go direct to junior officers. Members should not seek to 'jump the queue', but should be aware of and implement the Council's procedures. This approach ensures that resources are able to be appropriately prioritised and resourced.
- 6.3 Officers should seek to explain why a course of action is being recommended. Reports should lay out all relevant factors for the decision maker, and examine all alternatives in an even handed way.

Officer Reports and Actions from Committees

- 6.4 When an Officer provides a report it should contain clear, evidence-based advice as to why a course of action is being recommended. From time to time corporate advice is given to officers on report writing and they should take care to follow it. The report should lay out all relevant factors for the decision maker, and examine all alternatives in an even handed way. Officers should take care to include even unpopular options if they feel they are relevant.
- 6.5 The relevant Corporate Director will always be fully responsible (and retains ultimate responsibility) for the contents of any report submitted in their name. Any issues arising between a Member and a Corporate Director in this area should be referred to the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive for resolution.
- 6.6 Members have the right to criticise reports or the actions taken by officers, but they should: -
- not make personal attacks on officers; and
 - ensure that criticism is constructive and well-founded. (See also section 5.1 and 5.2)
- 6.7 Members have the ability to agree or reject proposals placed before them by officers, irrespective of the advice or recommendations made by officers so long as they generally act in good faith and exercise reasonableness in decision-making and specifically:-
- take into account relevant and dismiss irrelevant matters; and
 - do not come to a conclusion that no reasonable authority would come to.

Officers must therefore, be able to report to Members in accordance with their professional expertise.

- 6.8 Members should be mindful of taking part in the decision making process when they are actually biased, where it might appear to a fair and informed observer that there was a real possibility of bias, or where a Member has predetermined the matter by closing their mind to the merits of the decision.
- 6.9 A resolution may be passed at meetings which authorises an officer to take action between meetings after consultation with the Chair/ Lead Member/ Portfolio Member etc. It is the officer, not the Chair etc., who takes the action and is responsible for it. The Chair etc. does not himself/ herself have the power between meetings to make decisions.

D. Confidentiality and access to information (including Member Enquiries)

7. **As members and officers we:**
- a) **Maintain confidentiality**
 - b) **Ensure suitable access to information for Members**
 - c) **Are aware that a Member's rights to information are set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Constitution Part B Section 27) and are appropriate for the specific role of that Member.**
 - d) **Expect that all Members and officers will follow agreed council procedures especially in relation to dealing with Member Enquiries, constituent's queries/concerns and similar requests**

Routine Member Enquiries

- 7.1 The Council operates a Member's Enquiries system which is for the Mayor and Members to use for routine requests for information and advice. A copy of the procedure is found at [Member Enquiries Policy and Process \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk) (Internal only link) The maximum turn round time expected for such enquiries is 10 working days and officers will chase outstanding enquiries exceeding this period. Matters which are not routine or involve policy should be directed initially to the relevant Corporate Director or Director or any officer nominated by them.

Urgent Member Enquiries

7.2

- a) If the impact on the issue on constituents is extremely urgent, Members can contact to the Chief Officer or Director for the Department concerned.
- b) If access is denied or the Chief Officer / Director is in doubt about the right to access the information requested, the matter must be referred to the Monitoring Officer for determination.

7.3 The Member Enquiries system is managed by Customer Services and Mayor's Office staff also provide support to Executive Members as appropriate.

Access to Information

General

7.4 The following paragraphs identify the rights of Members and the procedures that they must comply with when applying for access to Cabinet/ Committee/ Sub-Committee papers and other documents/ information. These paragraphs take into account the following:

- Relevant legislation including the Local Government Act 1972; the Data Protection Act 1998; the General Data Protection Regulations; the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/2089)
- Local Government Transparency Code 2015
- Open and accountable local government: plain English guide
- Access to Information Procedure Rules (Part B Section 27 of the Constitution)
- Relevant case law

7.5 In principle, Members have the same ordinary rights of access to certain information as is enjoyed by the general public but they also have the right to access any other information (i.e. confidential or exempt) held by the Council of which they are a Member provided that it is reasonably necessary to enable the Member to properly perform their duties as a Member (see "Need to Know" below). This right of access of additional access may not extend to the publication of or otherwise making public such information as there may be issues of confidentiality.

Access to Committee Papers for Forthcoming Meetings

7.6 The rights of Members can be summarised as follows:-

- (i) Members enjoy the same access rights as members of the public in respect of Part I Cabinet/Committee/Sub-Committee papers.
- (ii) Members of the appropriate Cabinet/ Committee/ Sub-Committee will have a good reason for access to all Part II exempt information on the respective Cabinet/ Committee/ Sub-Committee agenda under the “Need to Know” principles (see below).
- (iii) Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have a prima facie “Need to Know” where they require access to Part II Cabinet agenda items as part of their scrutiny function provided the subject matter is within the Committee/ Sub-Committee’s terms of reference.
- (iv) All other Members who require access to confidential/ exempt Cabinet/ Committee/ Sub-Committee documentation will need to request disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or demonstrate a “Need to Know” by complying with the principles set out below.

Access to Other Documents/Information – “The Need to Know”

- 7.7 It is important to note that in some cases access to information to which the public is not entitled only applies where Members are clearly carrying out their role as elected representatives. Where a Member has a financial or personal interest in a matter the Member will only be entitled to the same access as would be the case for a private individual. In these circumstances, the Member must make it clear that they are acting in their private capacity and not as a Member.
- 7.8 Under common law principles Members have the right to access information held by the Council where it is reasonably necessary to enable the Member to properly perform their duties as a Member. This is known as the “Need to Know”. This means that information must not be used for party political purposes.
- 7.9 The common law “Need to Know” is the prima facie right of Members to inspect documents of the authority which exist as Members are under a duty to keep themselves informed of Council business which relate to their role as elected representatives. Thus, this right applies to Members who do not have statutory rights to exempt or confidential information and to other documents held by the Council under local government legislation or the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 7.10 For example, a Member is likely to have a prima facie “Need to Know” where they have a legitimate Ward problem and needs access to the documents that are relevant to that specific problem. Also, for example, a Cabinet Member

whose Portfolio covers the matter in question and they need to be aware of what is occurring for the purpose of their Cabinet position.

- 7.11 Access to information on the basis of a 'Need to Know' does not exist where the Member is considered to be "fishing" for information or seeks access for an ulterior/improper purpose (e.g. for a private purpose). Case law has established that mere idle curiosity as to what is in the documentation will not be sufficient.
- 7.12 It should be noted that some material (for example if commercially sensitive) may be redacted from information that is disclosed, if this does not affect the ability of a Member to exercise their role as an elected representative.
- 7.13 There will also be a range of documents which, because of their nature are either not accessible by Members (such as the personal records of an individual) or are accessible only by the political group forming the administration and not by the Members of other political groups. An example of this latter category would be draft documents compiled in the context of emerging Council policies and draft Committee reports, the premature disclosure of which might be against the Council's and the public interest.
- 7.14 Whilst the term "Council document" is very broad and includes, for example, any document produced with Council resources, it is accepted by convention that a Member of one political group will not have a "Need to Know" and therefore, a right to inspect, a document which forms part of the internal workings of another political group.

Use of Council Information and Confidentiality

- 7.15 Procedural Rules and specific local procedures (e.g. on contracts) require Members and officers to maintain confidentiality in certain circumstances. Officers are bound by their contracts of employment and any breach of confidentiality will almost certainly lead to disciplinary action. Officers must distinguish between assisting an elected representative in the course of the Member's Council business and dealing with the same person as a client or customer, e.g. a Housing Benefit claimant. In the latter case, Officers will treat the Member with the same degree of helpfulness, courtesy and confidentiality as would be afforded to any other member of the public in the same situation, and interpret the relevant rules and procedures as they would for any other client or customer.
- 7.16 Equally, any Council information provided to a Member on the basis of a 'Need to Know' must only be used by the Member for the purpose for which it was provided, i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the Member's duties as an elected representative of the Council. Confidential or exempt

information provided to Members may be discussed in Part II Committee meetings or in private meetings of appropriate Members and Officers. However, it should not be discussed with, or released to, any other persons. Any information provided should be clearly marked as confidential before it is released to Members.

- 7.17 In cases where a Member discloses information given to him/her in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by the Member which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature then that Member may find themselves the subject of a complaint to the Standards Advisory Committee that they have contravened the Code of Conduct for Members.
- 7.18 Similarly, the unauthorised disclosure of confidential or exempt information is regarded by the authority as a serious disciplinary offence for Officers. This includes an unauthorised disclosure to a Member.
- 7.19 Any request from a Member for information will be treated in confidence by Officers and will not be made known to any other Member or political group. Officers are also under a duty not to relate any information disclosed privately by a Member(s) (e.g. during Part II discussions at Committee, etc., informal briefings, private conversations or Group meetings) to another Member, Officer or person not already privy to that information.
- 7.20 The duty of officers to observe a Member's confidence however will not apply if the information disclosed relates to something which could damage the Council or which is illegal or constitutes maladministration. In this event the matter will be referred to the appropriate Corporate Director and/or Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive for further investigation and action as appropriate.
- 7.21 As a Member I must:
- a) follow Council procedures to obtain the information that I need to carry out my role. Officers within Directorates are accountable to their chief officer. Chief officers, through their senior management, are responsible for the allocation and prioritising of work by their staff recognising that there will be a number of competing tensions that I may not be aware of. I must not attempt to influence such decisions.
 - b) I am free to approach any Council Department to provide them with such information, explanation and advice about the Department's functions as I may reasonably need as a Member. This may range from a request for general information or documentation about some aspect of the Department's activities, to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent.

Officer advice to party groups

- 7.22 Officers must serve the Council as a whole and not exclusively any political group, combination of groups or any individual Member. Special rules apply to Political Group Assistants and the Mayor's Assistant and those post holders are made aware of them through separate guidance.
- 7.23 There is statutory recognition for party political groups and it is common practice for such groups to give preliminary consideration to matters of Council business in advance of such matters being considered by the relevant Council decision making body. Senior officers may properly be called upon to support and contribute to such deliberations by political groups but must at all times maintain political neutrality. All officers must, in their dealings with political groups and individual Members treat them in a fair and even-handed manner.
- 7.24 The support provided by officers can take many forms, ranging from a briefing meeting with the Mayor, a Cabinet Member/ Chair/ Spokesperson prior to a Council, Cabinet, Committee or Sub-Committee meeting to a presentation to a political group meeting. Whilst in practice such officer support is likely to be in most demand from whichever political group is in control of the Council at the time, such assistance is available to all political groups including ungrouped Members. Clarification of the support provided can be obtained from the Member Support Team.
- 7.25 Certain points, however, must be clearly understood by all those participating in this process, Members and Officer alike. In particular:
- (i) Requests for officers to attend any political group meeting must be made only to the appropriate member of the Corporate Leadership Team. Normally only that person will attend the meeting, although in exceptional circumstances they may be accompanied by one or more Senior Officers.
 - (ii) Unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Chief Executive, officers will not attend political group meetings that include persons who are not Members. However, where the Chief Executive has authorised such attendance special care needs to be exercised by officers involved in providing information and advice to such political group meetings. Persons who are not elected Members will not be bound by the Code of Conduct for Members (in particular, the provisions concerning the declaration of interests and confidentiality) and for this and other reasons officers may not be able to provide the same level of information and advice as they would to a Members only meeting.
 - (iii) Officer support (whether in the form of a written report or otherwise) must not extend beyond providing information and advice in relation to matters of Council business. Officer support will be limited to a statement of material facts and identification of options and the merits and demerits of

such options for the Authority. Reports or other support will not deal with any political implications of the matter or any option, and officers will not make any recommendations to a political group. Officers (with the exception of Political Group/ Mayor's Assistants) are not expected to be present at meetings or part of meetings when matters of party business are to be discussed.

- (iv) Political group meetings, whilst they form part of the preliminaries to Council decision making are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council. Conclusions reached at such meetings do not therefore rank as Council decisions and it is essential that they are not interpreted or acted upon as such.
- (v) It must not be assumed by any political group or Member that any Officer is supportive of any policy or strategy developed because of that officer's assistance in the formulation of that policy or strategy.
- (vi) Officers must respect the confidentiality of any political group discussions at which they are present in the sense that they should not relay the content of any such discussion to another political group or Member thereof. However, Members should be aware that this would not prevent officers from disclosing such information to other officers of the Council so far as is necessary to perform their duties.
- (vii) Where officers provide information and advice to a political group meeting in relation to a matter of Council business, it should be understood that the officers have a statutory duty to provide all necessary information and advice to the Mayor or Cabinet or relevant Committee/ Sub-Committee when the matter in question is considered.

E – Disrepute

8. As Members and officers we:

- a) Should be aware of the risks of damaging the reputation of the council or our roles as Members or officers**

If your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all of the facts that you are acting as a Member or an officer, this could lead to bringing the Council into disrepute Eg seeking an advantage/disadvantage/misusing your position in the community

This also applies to the use of social media. Refer to the Council's Social Media Policy at <https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/policy-and-procedures/general/social-media-policy-and-guidance> (internal link)

F. Use of Position

9. As Members and officers we:

- a) Do not use, or attempt to use, our positions improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of ourselves or anyone else.**
- b) Do not seek personal favours from officers or Members.**
- c) Declare close relationships or any possible perceived conflicts of interest. (See also Section H below)**

As a Member I:

- a) Do not get involved in the appointment, management and dismissal of officers (except where allowed elsewhere in this constitution)**
- b) Do not get involved in day-to-day staff management and grievance issues**

As an officer I:

- a) Do not raise matters concerning my employment with Members.**

Obtaining or granting favours

- 9.1 The Code of Conduct for Members emphasises the need for Members to avoid behaviour which could be viewed as conferring an advantage or disadvantage on an officer. Members must not seek personal favours from officers. Officers must not be tempted to give favours to please a Member. An example of favour seeking would be asking whether a Members' parking ticket could be withdrawn or whether an application for a service could be expedited. Similarly, officers must not seek to circumvent agreed staff consultative procedures by lobbying Members' on matters which directly concern them as employees.

Member involvement in officer issues

- 9.2 Issues relating to the appointment, management and dismissal of most officers are reserved by law to the Head of Paid Service and officers appointed by him/her. Member involvement in employment issues generally, including where they relate to senior officers, is set out in the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001
- 9.3 Occasions may arise where officers try to involve Members in day-to-day staff/ management issues. Members should strongly discourage such approaches. Officers should be advised to pursue matters with their management through the established procedures for resolving grievances etc. Officers must not raise matters concerning their employment with individual Members; to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Personal Familiarity

- 9.4 Personal familiarity between Members and officers can create the suspicion of improper conduct, however unfounded and can undermine public confidence in the Council. Whilst it is clearly important that there should be a close working relationship between when officers and Cabinet members or chairs of Committees, such relationships should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question, the officer's ability to deal impartially with other Members and other party groups.
- 9.5 Informal and collaborative two-way contact between Members and officers is encouraged; however, personal familiarity can damage the relationship, as might a family or business connection. It is accepted that some close relationships will develop, particularly when Members and officers work closely together but it is important that close relationships between Members and officers are openly declared and if any relationship might be seen as unduly influencing their work in their respective roles then they should inform the Monitoring Officer.
- 9.5 It is not enough to avoid actual impropriety, Members and officers should always be open about their relationships to avoid any reason for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct. Where a personal relationship has been disclosed, those concerned should avoid a situation where conflict could be perceived. Specifically, a Member should not sit on a body or participate in any decision which directly affects the officer on a personal basis.

G – Use of Local Authority resources and facilities

10. As Members and officers we:

- a) Will ensure that Members have appropriate support to conduct their council business**
- b) Operate within the rules of the Member Enquiries system**

As officers we:

- c) Provide a Member Enquiries system to manage enquiries and requests from Members and ensure that responses are sent within agreed timescales**
- d) Provide facilities for use by Members in relation to their role as a Member**

As a Member I:

- a) Only use Council facilities in relation to my role as a Member.**

Mayor's Office and Members Support

- 10.1 Both Mayor's Office staff and the Members' Support Team provide assistance to Members in their role as Council Members. Staff in these sections may, therefore, be used, as appropriate, to help with work such as diary management, meetings and correspondence to do with Council matters.
- 10.2 The Members' Support Team staff will assist with booking venues for, and publishing details of, Member' surgeries. The Mayor's Office book the Mayor's surgeries. Members' surgeries should normally be held within a Member's own ward, but a Member may arrange a surgery in premises outside their ward if this is necessary to provide suitable surgery facilities for their own constituents. Member must not ask Council officers to assist with any personal, business or party-political matters; attend surgeries; or decide how case work will be dealt with.
- 10.3 Member Support also provide a package of Member Learning and Development training to support Members in their Council related work.

Council Facilities

- 10.4 Members must use any Council facilities that are provided in their role as a Member strictly for that purpose and no other. For example, Members must not use rooms in the Town Hall or other buildings or any of the Council's paper, email addresses, telephone numbers, computers, photocopiers, or printers for any personal, business related or party political matter, nor, for example, on behalf of any community groups of which the Member is a member, unless formal approval has been given by the appropriate chief officer. If non-approved use is made, it could lead to a complaint under the Members Code of Conduct.
- 10.5 The use of Council facilities and services by Members during a pre-election period for election campaigning or political purposes is not allowed. Specific guidance will be issued at that time to both Members and officers. If non-approved use is made, it could lead to a complaint under the Members Code of Conduct
- 10.6 From time-to-time training and guidelines on the proper and effective use of Council IT resources will be issued.
- 10.7 The Council will only provide indemnities to Members or officers in circumstances which fall within the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004. The Chief Executive will decide in the individual circumstances of each case whether an indemnity is appropriate.

Political Party Workers

10.8 Members are often assisted by political party workers. There is no objection to this, but no non-elected party worker has any entitlement to:

- information to which a Member has access in their role as Mayor or Member;
- use Council facilities provided for the use of Members.

The principles which apply to use of facilities provided for Members (and the officers employed to assist them) apply equally to all Council property and facilities and all Council employees.

Council Buildings

10.9 Where Members and officers share an office building particular care needs to be taken to maintain appropriate lines of contact.

In an open plan office environment Members and officers must be particularly careful to maintain confidentiality and the Council's meeting rooms and facilities should be used to discuss sensitive or confidential issues.

POLITICAL ASSISTANTS

10.10 Section 9 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 gives councils a power to appoint up to 3 political assistants to qualifying political groups. A political assistant undertakes research and provides administrative support to the main political group in the Council. Whilst the Act allows the political affiliation of an individual to be taken into account in the appointment of any Political or Mayor's Assistant, they remain officers of the Council and must therefore not undertake any activity, which may be deemed unlawful. In this context, it should be realised that officer support to the political groups is in the context of their role in the discharge of Council business and although it may require liaison with political parties, at both local and national level, should not be used in promoting the views of an individual political party or undertaking campaigning or other party political business.

10.12 Political assistants hold politically restricted posts and therefore also face restrictions on their personal political activity.

H - Interests

11 Legal Interests

- 11.1 There is a whole range of circumstances where the Council as a corporate body may be involved in legal proceedings. This could be against residents or other individuals, organisations and companies, and across the whole range of service areas including housing, planning, highways, etc. Members have a clear role in representing residents' and general public interests. In this representative capacity, Members will inevitably become involved in issues where the Council is considering, or is in the process of taking legal action, or where the Council is the defendant to legal actions brought by third parties.
- 11.2 Conflicts of interest will almost certainly occur when a Member is enquiring on behalf of an individual or body involved in legal action by or against the Council. In such cases, Members will be required to balance their representative role with their wider responsibilities in representing the corporate interests of the authority. For this reason, Members must be circumspect in any dealing with persons taking action against the Council, or against whom any legal action is being taken. Particularly, Members must be extremely cautious about having any dealings with professional representatives, advisers or witnesses in the case. Not only could such intervention prejudice the Council's position but the Members could find himself/ herself accused of an offence of Misconduct of Public Office or, Perverting the Course of Justice or an attempt or conspiracy to do so.
- 11.3 It is therefore particularly important that Members should be sure not only to avoid any actual impropriety, but at all times avoid any occasion for suspicion or any appearance of improper conduct.
- 11.4 Whilst Members have every right to information on how any such matter is being dealt with and a duty to represent their constituents, However, the response on behalf of the Council will necessarily be limited to comments on process, so as not to prejudice the proceedings.
- 11.5 In respect of any ongoing or contemplated proceedings, all enquiries must be addressed to either the appropriate Director or Corporate Director. On no account is the Member to contact any officers involved in the proceedings to discuss or make any enquiries regarding the proceedings.
- 11.6 If a Member believes that the Council's actions or intentions are wrong, they should inform the Corporate Director concerned. It must then be for the Corporate Director to determine what action to take. If the Member remains unhappy with the action taken, then they should refer the matter to the Council's Monitoring Officer or to the Chief Executive.

I - Complying with the Protocol

12 As Members and officers we:

- a) Will always look to resolve issues amicably and through the procedures set out below.**

When things go wrong

Procedure for officers

- 12.1 If an officer has a complaint about a Member it is always preferable to resolve matters informally, through an appropriate senior manager. If the matter cannot be resolved informally or it is not suitable for such then officers can make a complaint to the Monitoring Officer.

Procedure for Members

- 12.2 If a Member has a concern about the conduct or capability of an officer, they should raise the matter privately with the appropriate Director or Corporate Director. Any concern about a Corporate Director should be raised privately with the Chief Executive. Any concern about the Chief Executive should be raised privately with the Monitoring Officer.

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| Non-Executive Report of the: Council 15 th November 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Questions submitted by Members of the Council | |

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| Originating Officer(s) | Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services |
| Wards affected | All wards |

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions that were submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Mayor, the Speaker or the Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee for this Council meeting.
2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4, questions relating to Executive functions and decisions taken by the Mayor are put to the Mayor unless he delegates such a decision to another Member, who will therefore be responsible for answering the question. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will answer questions directed to the Mayor.
3. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. Council Procedure Rule 10.7 provides for an answer to take the form of a written answer circulated to the questioner, a reference to a published work or a direct oral answer.
5. There is a time limit of thirty minutes at the Council meeting for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any questions not put within this time are dealt with by way of written responses.
6. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

28 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

11.1 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed

Could the lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for years under the previous administration.

11.2 Question from Councillor Mohammed Chowdhury

A significant number of residents in Mile End, as well as throughout Tower Hamlets, are facing challenges when it comes to electric car charging. The availability of both slow and fast chargers is currently insufficient, leading to car owners driving around for extended periods in search of a charging station, which results in time-consuming charging processes. This situation is adversely impacting people's employment and daily routines. Could you please provide information about the council's strategy and plans for the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the area?

11.3 Question from Councillor Amin Rahman

Can the lead member provide an update on the outcome of the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place between 18th and 22nd September of this year?

11.4 Question from Councillor Marc Francis

How many homeless families are still currently housed in B&Bs beyond the six-week limit?

11.5 Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain

Could the lead member explain how he intends to generate much needed income from events in Victoria Park? Can he tell us how many events are being considered over the year, their capacities and how much does he expect to raise? I understand this money will go towards balancing the council budget as well as maintaining the park.

11.6 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

The Millwall Rugby Club serves a broad and diverse community on the Isle of Dogs. It has established a presence in Millwall arches which they have done up themselves and installed utilities to an underutilised shell. Please could the Mayor and Lead Member explain why the Millwall Rugby Club has received over a 100% increase in its rent for this year?

11.7 Question from Councillor Harun Miah

Can the lead member share feedback from secondary schools regarding the implementation of free school meal introduced by the Mayor this year?

11.8 Question from Councillor Asma Islam

Could the lead member provide me with the numbers of homes that have been built in the last year for social rent and how that compares against the council's target?

11.9 Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir

Could the lead member update the council on the independent investigation into housing management following the complaint brought by 31 members of staff in the department?

11.10 Question from Councillor Asma Begum

Could the lead member provide me with the details of which contracts have been awarded in relation to the removal of the liveable streets scheme and which companies have been granted those contracts?

11.11 Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Can the lead member provide an update on Local Plan refresh and outline any significant changes which will help bring investment and the delivery of much needed housing?

11.12 Question from Councillor Ayas Miah

How many waste collections have been missed by the council since the end of the waste strikes?

11.13 Question from Councillor Abdul Mannan

This Cost-of-Living crisis has seen the poorest and most vulnerable in Tower Hamlets hit hardest. Can the lead member tell us what measures are in place to support residents and how much financial assistance has been provided to date?

11.14 Question from Councillor Rebakah Sultana

How many meetings of The Mayor's Keep our Borough Moving forum have taken place and who currently sits on the forum/board?

11.15 Question from Councillor Musthak Ahmed

Could the lead member provide an update on the ongoing work to address the service issues outlined in the waste emergency declared by the Mayor last year?

11.16 Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain

With THH now back in house, could the lead member outline the plans for properties that are currently in disrepair?

11.17 Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled

Could the lead member provide an update on how the Council is looking to maximise carbon offset funding for this year?

11.18 Question from Councillor James King

What discussions have the council had with TFL about the impact of traffic on commercial road with the opening of Silvertown Tunnel and the tolling of the Blackwall tunnel.

11.19 Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan

Could the lead member provide an update on the progress of the insourcing of Tower Hamlets Homes to Council control?

11.20 Question from Councillor Amina Ali

How much did the council spend on private waste contractors during strike action taken by Unite? And what are the names of the companies who were awarded those contracts?

11.21 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah

When are the consultations for the latest proposals for St Georges Pool coming forward?

11.22 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar

What discussions has the Mayor had with the trustees of the Stifford Centre about its proposed redevelopment?

11.23 Question from Councillor Leelu Ahmed

The new playground Rhodeswell Road has been unfinished for months, when will it be completed?

11.24 Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed

Could the lead member provide a final financial figure for the costs of refurbishment of the mayor's office?

11.25 Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam

What is the council's current social rent policy, and can the council confirm if it has been modified in the last year?

11.26 Question from Councillor Sabina Khan

What action is being taken by the council to work with the multi-faith forum to recognise and welcome the diverse nature of communities across the borough?

11.27 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

May I be provided with the number and types of new electric vehicle chargers installed by LBTH each calendar year since 2020 and so far this year to the end of October 2023?

11.28 Question from Councillor Nathalie Bienfait


“The response to my previous question regarding the number of homes which meet the decent homes standard has elicited a follow-up.

You said:

“The council has a duty to review local housing conditions and identify appropriate action that may be required across properties which may be hazardous. Following a service request or complaint about poor housing conditions from any resident within the private or social rented sector, council officers will undertake a review with an initial risk assessment will normally be carried out. The council will take further action to deal with health and safety concerns or issues which cause a statutory nuisance.”

Could you please provide data for the last 5 years on how many service requests, complaints and reviews have been conducted by housing officers of LBTH in relation to this kind of complaint?”

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| Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 15 th November 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Motions submitted by Members of the Council | |

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| Originating Officer(s) | Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services |
| Wards affected | All wards |

SUMMARY

1. The following motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the motions alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS

Set out overleaf is the motions that have been submitted.

12.1 Motion on MOTION ON THE PUBLIC BODY PAY GAP

Proposed by: Cllr Maisha Begum

Seconded by: Cllr XX

Research from across civil society, including the GMB union shows that there is an Ethnicity Pay Gap, between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic worker and non-Black Asian and Minority Ethnic workers who are otherwise equal in educational attainment. This is not only reflected in the pay of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers, but this disparity is also apparent in the promotion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers in the workplace.

This council notes that:

- One in six Bangladeshi residents across England and Wales live in Tower Hamlets. Locally, the Bangladeshi population remains by far the largest in the country in both proportionate (34.6%) and numerical (107,333) terms.
- Other significant ethnic groups include White British (22.9%), White Other (14.6%), Black African (5%), Chinese (3.3%) and Somali or Somalilander (2%)
- GMB Race, the union's self-organised groups in London, sent out a survey to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic London workers to collect information about their Pay, Terms and Conditions. GMB Race's survey results, while disappointing, unsurprisingly show the fact that only half of respondents thought they received equal treatment and access to bonuses, overtime, pension, and other plus payments compared to non-BAME staff.
- The TUC's own research shows that the Ethnicity Pay Gap for minority workers has shown that students who entered the workplace after GCSE are paid 11% less than their white counterparts. Whilst those who attained degrees, the pay gap more than doubled to 23%. The race pay gap impacts the standard of living of those affected and also worsens for people who have aspired and succeeded in further education.
- The Resolution Foundation has shown that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers lose out on £3.2bn a year in wages compared to white workers. It found Pakistani and Bangladeshi male graduates earned an average £2.67 an hour (12%) less, while among female graduates, black women faced the biggest pay penalty, of £1.62 an hour (9%).
- Within Tower Hamlets only 33.1% of the borough's top 5% of earners are BAME.
- The general reporting of the pay gap is poor and recent figures show so far only 3% of employers with over 250 employees are voluntarily reporting their ethnicity pay gap.
- The Government has acknowledged this weakness and that Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting should be mandatory. However, this has not happened.
- The Women's and Equalities Committee's (WESC) report Ethnicity Pay Gap in February 2022 recommended that the Government should introduce mandatory

ethnicity pay gap reporting by April 2023. This should be for all organisations that currently report for gender and that legislation should include the requirement for employers to publish a supporting narrative and action plan.

- This call has been echoed by the TUC.

This council believes that:

- All those that live and work within Tower Hamlets should be equally able to flourish in their place of employment. Therefore, there should be no glass ceiling because of the colour of someone's skin. Pay, promotions, career development and progression and bonuses in all sectors should be underpinned by ability and fairness. This is vital in eradicating systemic racism and division in wider society and a cause acutely relevant to the diverse community in this borough.
- With a cost-of-living crisis hitting households hard, the diminishing earnings of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers will disproportionately push many of such workers further into work poverty.
- This disproportionately affects local authorities, like Tower Hamlets, who are proud of their diverse and multicultural communities.
- All public bodies within the borough should be committed to being open and transparent about publishing its data on employees, whilst running fair, open and inclusive promotion strategies within its public sector duties. Such public data is the first step in creating awareness of the ethnicity pay gap with a view to drive change.
- Other employers across all sectors should do the same and that there should be mandatory reporting of the Ethnicity Pay Gap for all employers with 250 or more staff members.

This council resolves to:

- Adopt GMB Race's campaign for an Ethnicity Pay Gap, including:
- Agree to annually report on the Ethnicity Pay Gap within its own organisation;
- Endeavour to regularly analyse strengths and weakness based on its own reporting, devising and implementing annual plans to proactively put in place measures to ensure there are no bars to recruitment, training, salary levels or promotion, including local schemes to give opportunities for BAME staff to achieve promotion and occupy more senior positions within the Council;
- Work with the three recognised Councils unions locally and to adopt GMB Race campaigns Ethnicity Pay Gap Charter;

- Work with council suppliers, contractors and partners to seek to do the same encouraging best practice through procurement rules as relevant, including in the contracting of any new services; and
- Call upon the Government to introduce mandatory pay gap reporting