



Meeting of the

# Tower Hamlets Council

## Agenda

**Wednesday, 8 May 2024 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.

### **Democratic Services Contact:**

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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, 8 MAY 2024**

Stephen Halsey  
Chief Executive



The best of London in one borough

**Tower Hamlets Council**  
Tower Hamlets Town Hall  
160 Whitechapel Road  
London E1 1BJ

## 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.

To access this, click [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee) and search for the relevant committee and meeting date.

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](http://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, 8 May 2024

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 - 76

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary and Budget Meeting of the Council held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

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

#### 5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

77 - 80

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 81 - 82**

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 83 - 84**

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 None**

## **10. OTHER BUSINESS None**

## **11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 85 - 88**

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 89 - 90**

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



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# 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.

## **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, 24 JANUARY 2024**

**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 James King (Member)
Councillor Amina Ali (Member)	Councillor Amy Lee (Member)
Councillor Asma Begum (Member)	Councillor Abdul Malik (Member)
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait (Member)	Councillor Abdul Mannan (Member)
Councillor Rachel Blake (Member)	Councillor Ana Miah (Member)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin (Member)	Councillor Ayas Miah (Member)
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Harun Miah (Member)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Amin Rahman (Member)
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Rebaka Sultana (Member)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Maium Talukdar (Member)
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Bellal Uddin (Member)
Councillor Marc Francis (Member)	Councillor Abdal Ullah (Member)
Councillor Peter Golds (Member)	Councillor Abdul Wahid (Member)

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

The Speaker of the Council provided his update to the Council. He noted that he had attended several events, including events to celebrate new businesses, educational and sporting achievements as well as welcoming new citizens to the borough. Other highlights included:

- Attending the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Victory Day of Bangladesh;
- Attending the London in Bloom ceremony last year and seeing the success of the Borough's Parks and Gardens;

- Joining civic colleagues at the London Government Dinner in January and
- Holding a successful Speakers event for the charities he is fundraising for – St Joseph’s Hospice and Eden Care UK.

Finally, the Speaker reminded members Holocaust Memorial Day was to take place on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and said it was a day for everyone to remember the millions of Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust along with many minority groups, under Nazi persecution and the other genocides around the world which followed.

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Maisha Begum
- Stephen Halsey – Chief Executive LBTH for whom Denise Radley, Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care was deputising

Councillor Sabina Khan was unable to join the meeting in person but joined remotely. It was noted that she would be unable to vote as she was not formally in attendance.

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

Councillor Musthak Ahmed declared an Non-Registerable Other Interest in Agenda Item 5.1 Petition on Saving THCAN as he was a Council appointee to the East End Citizen Advice Bureau who had links with THCAN. He remained in the meeting for discussion on that item.

## 3. MINUTES

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agreed that the minutes of the ordinary Council meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> November 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.**

Denise Radley, Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care provided an update to the Council meeting, highlighting the following issues:

- She informed Council Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January was Holocaust Memorial Day, a day to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of people murdered under Nazi persecution of other groups and during more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. To mark the day, the Council was working with faith and community groups in the borough to hold a series of free events during the week.
- In relation to Free School Meals, Tower Hamlets featured as a case study in an ITV piece about a new study into the benefits of free school meals. The piece was on ITV national news and all regions outside of London. In addition, Tower Hamlets had been named a finalist for the APPG Group Excellence in School Food Awards which was being held on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- Lastly, Ms Radley said she was delighted to announce that the Town Hall had won a Civic Trust Award with the ceremony in March.

## 5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

### 5.1 Petition requesting Save THCAN

Sarah Sauvat, Vicky Scott and Shuhel Alom presented their petition requesting the saving of THCAN. Ms Sauvat stated the network had been instrumental in supporting advice services in Tower Hamlets for many years. She said that without funding THCAN could not support organisations and individuals like it had done in the past - through workshops, signposting, information and advice, training plus upskilling of staff in various disciplines such as bid and contract writing.

Ms Sauvat and her colleagues requested Members to continue to support THCAN as a vital network organisation.

Members asked questions of the petitioner before Councillor Saied Ahmed Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost-of-Living responded to matters raised in the petition. Councillor Ahmed stated that the importance of the voluntary sector in delivering critical support to residents is recognised. The Mayor's Community Grants Programme is one source of funding for advice provision and funding was based on applications meeting the required criteria. He said it was unfortunate the THCAN applications were unsuccessful because on one project they did not meet the minimum scoring threshold required as set out in the prospectus. On the second project it was not recommended for funding as there were other higher scoring projects that were more relevant to the theme priorities.

The Council **RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director for Communities for a written response within 28 days.

## 5.2 Petition regarding restricting events in Victoria Park

Lauma Kalns-Timans and Anwar Miah presented their petition regarding the restriction of events held in Victoria Park. They called upon the Mayor to reverse the decision to increase the number of events held in Victoria Park. They stated local residents and the 'Friends of Victoria Park' group had not been consulted about the changes in policy. Ms Kalns-Timans said the extra events would increase the number of people who would attend each event from 5,000 to 20,000 and would ruin the park's environment and reduce accessibility to local residents, children and families especially during the summer holidays. Ms Kalns-Timans and Mr Miah asked the Mayor to reverse his decision.

Members asked questions of the petitioner before Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation responded to matters raised in the petition. He said an additional two major event days per annum can be considered through the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park, subject to event organisers obtaining a Premises License and meeting the council's robust requirements for holding an event.

The council assesses applications on a case-by-case basis. All major events and events with a capacity over 499 that include regulated entertainment and /or sale of alcohol require a Premises License. He said the Council had a strong track record of responsibly managing events and activities across its parks and open spaces with major events going through an enhanced planning process.

The Council **RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director for Communities for a written response within 28 days.

## 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

### MOTION ON COUNCIL'S PTS AND CFZ SCHEME

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda on the Permit Transfer Scheme and Car Free Zone that had been moved by Councillor Kabir Hussain and seconded by Councillor Kabir Ahmed.

Council also considered the amendment proposed by Councillor Asma Islam and seconded by Councillor Rebeka Sultana as set out in the supplementary agenda.

#### **ADDITIONS BOLD**

#### **DELETIONS STRUCKTHROUGH**

#### **This council notes:**

- The high levels of overcrowding in the borough, with over 23,000 residents currently on the housing waiting list, and 14,000 in acute overcrowding.
- The detrimental impact that such levels of overcrowding have on residents, affecting health; educational attainment; employment opportunities; and quality of life.
- That some residents rely on their cars and vehicles for business and familial duties of care.
- That despite this, Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest car ownership rates in the country, and the third lowest in London.
- That many residents refuse the chance to move to larger properties that could relieve some of these pressures associated with overcrowding, due to these properties' lack of a parking space.
- That this has contributed to the growing list of residents waiting for suitably-sized homes.
- **That the Car Free Zone policy was brought in nearly twenty years ago in an effort both to mitigate the impact of new development on the environment in Tower Hamlets and ensure existing car owners were not disadvantaged by significant numbers of new residents obtaining parking permits;**
- **That there were many complaints from social housing tenants who were forced to give up their resident parking permit when they moved into a larger property within a scheme covered by a Car Free Zone restriction;**
- **That Some tenants moved into properties which were not advertised as being in a Car Free Zone, and some only belatedly became aware when LBTH began enforcing the restriction two or three years later;**

- **Residents living within a Car Free Zone development were not even entitled to Visitors Parking Scratch-cards;**
- **That on 29th November 2023 Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his administration agreed to change and amend the council's policy on PTS criteria however this change is not applied retrospectively to those who already are affected by this policy dating back over a decade.**

**This council believes:**

- That the existing Permit Transfer Scheme (PTS) was unsuitable and incompatible with the needs of residents in Tower Hamlets.
- That the criteria to qualify for the Permit Transfer Scheme was too restrictive, and dissuaded residents from moving into new properties due to their fear of losing their car parking space.
- That a newer, bespoke approach to the scheme was required, and that this has been captured in the new PTS strategy adopted on 30<sup>th</sup> November.
- That the following principles will contribute to a reduction in overcrowding in Tower Hamlets:
  - Families will now qualify if they live in overcrowded properties and are moving into larger properties with two or more bedrooms, instead of three or more bedrooms.
  - A resident is no longer required to have held an on-street resident parking permit for 12 months prior to moving into a car-free property.
  - A resident no longer loses their right to a permit if it is cancelled or expires.
  - If one member of the household cancels their permit, then another member can apply for a new one.
  - An individual or family can now downsize and keep one resident permit under the PTS.
- That the related Car Free Zone (CFZ) scheme also unfairly punishes those residents who rely on their vehicles for work.
- That the proposed changes to the CFZ scheme being explored by the Mayor will complement the changes enacted by the review of the PTS scheme, where the new CFZ scheme would:
  - Apply to all residents living in car-free properties.
  - Allow for a maximum of three permits per household.
- That this new approach to the CFZ scheme – that would apply to residents who live in a car-free development who are not currently eligible to apply for an on-street parking permit, and their own vehicle is crucial to their



livelihood and their ability to work, such as licensed mini cabbage (including Uber) – will halt the penalisation of those who rely on their vehicles to work, many of whom do so as second or third jobs.

- That this new approach to the CFZ scheme will contribute to the reduction of those numbers of residents currently on the housing waiting list and towards reducing overcrowding in the borough.
- That as well as implementing **the new PTS + CFZ** schemes to all future developments, the new provisions should be ~~—where possible—~~ applied retrospectively to existing developments, to ensure that opportunities to support the reduction of overcrowding in the borough, as well as those residents who rely on their vehicles for work, can be maximised.

**This council resolves:**

- To support and promote this new PTS scheme, with a view to encouraging a shortening of the housing waiting list.
- To thank the Lead Member and officers for their work on the revised PTS scheme.
- To support the Lead Member and officers in the continued revision of the CFZ scheme.
- **To call on the Mayor Lutfur Rahman to ensure his PTS policy will be in effect retrospectively across all existing affected residents as well as new residents.**
- **To ensure that the retrospective application of the PTS are accommodated through the 2024/25 budget.**

Following debate, the amendment moved by Councillor Asma Islam was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

The motion as moved by Councillor Maium Miah Talukdar was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

**This council notes:**

- The high levels of overcrowding in the borough, with over 23,000 residents currently on the housing waiting list, and 14,000 in acute overcrowding.
- The detrimental impact that such levels of overcrowding have on residents, affecting health; educational attainment; employment opportunities; and quality of life.

- That some residents rely on their cars and vehicles for business and familial duties of care.
- That despite this, Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest car ownership rates in the country, and the third lowest in London.
- That many residents refuse the chance to move to larger properties that could relieve some of these pressures associated with overcrowding, due to these properties' lack of a parking space.
- That this has contributed to the growing list of residents waiting for suitably-sized homes.

**This council believes:**

- That the existing Permit Transfer Scheme (PTS) was unsuitable and incompatible with the needs of residents in Tower Hamlets.
- That the criteria to qualify for the Permit Transfer Scheme was too restrictive, and dissuaded residents from moving into new properties due to their fear of losing their car parking space.
- That a newer, bespoke approach to the scheme was required, and that this has been captured in the new PTS strategy adopted on 30<sup>th</sup> November.
- That the following principles will contribute to a reduction in overcrowding in Tower Hamlets:
  - Families will now qualify if they live in overcrowded properties and are moving into larger properties with two or more bedrooms, instead of three or more bedrooms.
  - A resident is no longer required to have held an on-street resident parking permit for 12 months prior to moving into a car-free property.
  - A resident no longer loses their right to a permit if it is cancelled or expires.
  - If one member of the household cancels their permit, then another member can apply for a new one.
  - An individual or family can now downsize and keep one resident permit under the PTS.
- That the related Car Free Zone (CFZ) scheme also unfairly punishes those residents who rely on their vehicles for work.
- That the proposed changes to the CFZ scheme being explored by the Mayor will complement the changes enacted by the review of the PTS scheme, where the new CFZ scheme would:

- Apply to all residents living in car-free properties.
- Allow for a maximum of three permits per household.
- That this new approach to the CFZ scheme – that would apply to residents who live in a car-free development who are not currently eligible to apply for an on-street parking permit, and their own vehicle is crucial to their livelihood and their ability to work, such as licensed mini cabbage (including Uber) – will halt the penalisation of those who rely on their vehicles to work, many of whom do so as second or third jobs.
- That this new approach to the CFZ scheme will contribute to the reduction of those numbers of residents currently on the housing waiting list and towards reducing overcrowding in the borough.
- That as well as implementing these new schemes to all future developments, the new provisions should be – where possible – applied retrospectively to existing developments, to ensure that opportunities to support the reduction of overcrowding in the borough, as well as those residents who rely on their vehicles for work, can be maximised.

**This council resolves:**

- To support and promote this new PTS scheme, with a view to encouraging a shortening of the housing waiting list.
- To thank the Lead Member and officers for their work on the revised PTS scheme.
- To support the Lead Member and officers in the continued revision of the CFZ scheme.

**8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE**

**LGA Peer Review**

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda on the LGA Peer Review that had been moved by Councillor Marc Francis and seconded by Councillor Amina Ali.

Council also considered the amendment proposed by Councillor Maium Talukdar and seconded by Councillor Kabir Ahmed as set out in the supplementary agenda.

Councillor Sabina Akhtar raised a point of order under the Council's Constitution Part B – Responsibility and Functions and decision-making procedures and referred to paragraph 13.6 and said the Labour group strongly objected to the re-writing of their motion. The Monitoring Officer accepted significant changes had been proposed but said the changes did not completely rewrite the original motion.

**ADDITIONS BOLD****DELETIONS STRUCKTHROUGH****This council notes:**

- An LGA Peer Review is designed to provide a **rigorous** critical-friend **review**. ~~external support, rather than an independent audit or inspection of the quality and performance of local authority services.~~
- **The LGA Corporate Peer Review is entirely independent of the Council and examines the performance of the Council holistically examining all of the Council's key performance metrics and their performance against them as well as addressing structure, the political interface, governance, leadership of place and organisation culture. The peer review is conducted by senior figures in the world of local government that in our case included Labour's Steve Bullock (ex-directly elected mayor of Lewisham) and Carolyn Downs who spent many years as Chief Executive of Brent, has previously been Chief executive of the LGA, Chief Executive of the Legal Services Commssion and Deputy Permanent Secretary and Director General for Ministry of Justice. The Comment also ignores the fact that subsequent to the LGA review the Council underwent a further independent inspection and improved its performance for Investors In People confirming that the organisation had a robust and healthy approach to its staff and staff management.**
- **As you would expect** ~~However, this did not inhibit the LGA peer group from providing some stark wording in the~~ **useful** narrative ~~in~~ of the report itself and offer **valuable** ~~serious~~ recommendations ~~to address concerning issues~~ regarding the political and executive management of the council.
- **In fact it was a well-considered balanced report that compares well with recent LGA reports into other local authorities given the unique social and economic profile of the Borough.**
- **The report concluded that the new administration:**
  - **had provided a fresh impetus to the Council,**
  - **Members and Officers had done well to delivery of election promises to date including free school meals and implementation of the educational maintenance allowance,**
  - **had a sound financial base.**
  - **had an ambitious set of priorities that were widely understood by Members, Officers and Partners,**

- Praised the Councils Communications team,
- Had a highly skilled, dedicated workforce evidently committed to delivering the best outcomes for the Borough,

Their report also:

- Commended the Council for developing a three year financial plan which will enable investment in services and priority areas once completed.
- Commended the Council for some very effective partnership working in Tower Hamlets
- Recognised statutory partnership working to be particularly strong.
- Commended the council for being committed to being a learning organisation with a genuine appetite to explore and adopt best practice.
- Acknowledged that the council demonstrated a high degree of organisational maturity in its positive response to critical challenge.
- Commended the Council for creating the Transformation Board.
- That the LGA Peer Review **agreed with the concerns that had been raised with it in advance of the review by the Mayor and the current CEO found that** “there are ‘two councils’ in operation at Tower Hamlets which is impacting on the speed and effectiveness of decision making.”
- The LGA also **expressed concerns around trust, sign off of decisions and delays to decision making.** ~~found “there is a lack of trust between the Mayor’s Office and senior officers, with examples of inappropriate questioning and pressure to feed things into the Mayor’s Office for ‘sign off’”.~~
- ~~• That this had led to: “unnecessary delays, with an example of one service area waiting for four months to receive a decision on something which would have previously been a delegated decision to officers.”~~
- **This was a legacy of the previous administration and Mayor who delegated significant mayoral powers to officers, which in our**

opinion left behind a culture of two councils. By contrast, the LGA concluded that 'The Mayor is providing strong political leadership and is seen as approachable by both members and officers alike. Cabinet members are passionate about delivering the council's priorities and want what is best for the residents across the borough'.

- The very positive IIP inspection that followed the LGA review suggests that the two-council culture issue is being addressed quickly and constructively and the new management team are bringing the staff with them on an improvement journey.
- The Action Plan report includes a review of the Mayor's office which has already been completed leading to savings for the Council. ~~states "Some of the functions of the Mayor's Office are duplicating existing structures causing confusion regarding internal governance processes within the council and as a result is. The size of the Mayor's Office is an outlier when compared to other mayoral authorities and this is largely because there are many officers there who would ordinarily be located elsewhere in the council."~~
- The Mayor has empowered the Council, through strong central leadership and strategic direction, which has enabled the Council to reinvest in services. His Office has worked with services across the Council to deliver one of the most ambitious, progressive and expansive policy programmes seen in Local Government.
- ~~Under the previous administration the 2021 LGA Peer review found that: "There is a strong and cohesive Senior Leadership Team well led by the Chief Executive, with all elements of the leadership team describing good member-officer relationships upon which decision-making is based."~~
- The 2023 LGA peer review makes clear that there has been a very considerable churn in senior management since May 2022 – **which is not uncommon following a change of political and managerial leadership'** and it noted that the Council's recruitment process was well underway., ~~which is potentially destabilising to the authority and unhelpful in securing improvements to performance.~~
- ~~To note further departures of senior staff and the failure to find appointable candidates to the roles of Corporate Director of Children's Services and Housing & Regeneration.~~
- During this period the Council has successfully embarked upon a major transformation and improvement programme, significantly improved its financial position, secured long overdue audit sign off of Council accounts, improved its IIP rating and supported the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.
- The actions included in the Action Plan are drawn directly from the 70+ positive suggestions and recommendations contained

within the LGA report. All of these have been addressed, often using the wording in the report to frame the action. To this extent there was limited necessity for content discussion. All of the LGA suggestions and recommendations are to be addressed via specific actions. This does not preclude collaboration or engagement in respect of the development of solutions and project leads are encouraged to engage all relevant stakeholders where practical. The CEO has extended an invitation to members of the Council to discuss the LGA Peer Review findings. The Corporate Peer Action Plan will be the subject of review by the Overview and Scrutiny committee on a regular basis. The first date for the committee to consider progress in relation to the action plan is currently being scheduled and will be revisited on a quarterly basis. This approach has been agreed with the Chair of the overview scrutiny committee and further details will be available on the councils committee website.

- ~~In response to the LGA Peer Review, Labour councillors offered to work with the Mayor and Corporate Leadership Team to help devise solutions to address these concerns, but that this offer was simply ignored and so Opposition councillors~~ **are being invited to attend a meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss the Corporate Challenge Review Report and Action Plan.** ~~have been invited to a meeting with the~~ ~~have had no input into what a corporate response should be.~~
- The peer review **noted** ~~was critical of~~ how scrutiny is conducted and found “the chair of the scrutiny committee and all sub committees are currently from the **majority** ruling party (Aspire) **as is common practice.** ~~which does not reflect best practice. This also means that all the Chairs are male. Similarly, it~~ **notes** ~~draws attention to the absence of women in both the Cabinet~~ **despite Aspire offering positions to opposition female councillors which were refused.** ~~itself and the political decision-making process. as being ‘concerning’.~~
- The Action Plan put forward in November ~~simply ignores the~~ **sets out actions to define current best practice in relation to chairing, membership, and cross party working in and of committees including the Overview & Scrutiny Committee its Sub-Committees and the Audit Committee. It will conduct a review of current terms of reference for committees based on best practice including the appointment of women to lead or undertake senior political positions within the council. The Mayor will receive recommendations from that review and agree any necessary actions. The Mayor’s conclusions will be published.** ~~recommendation that should be Chaired by an Opposition councillor.~~
- The Audit Committee has already considered the CIPFA recommendations on how its membership should be structured and agreed changes to ensure it remains robust and effective.

- In 2022 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to Cllr Sabina Khan's appointment as a Scrutiny Lead. This year again the position was offered to a female opposition councillor. It is unfortunate that this was refused and a male labour Councillor was proposed. ~~Aspire councillors blocked the appointment of the Labour Group's nominee to the Lead Scrutiny Member for Resources portfolio, preferring to leave this position vacant to avoid a Labour councillor having the power to lead the scrutiny of Tower Hamlets Council's finances.~~
- ~~The report notes that under this administration relationships with some third sector/voluntary partners "have weakened" possibly due to the introduction of the new mayor's community grant programme which has increased the number of organisations who can access Council grants. and that they "felt that they have not been properly involved in the co-design of the programme and as a result their confidence is low".~~
- The Council recognises the need to maintain good working relationships with all voluntary sector organisations where possible but also recognises that it may not be possible to please everyone when making structural decisions about the way in which resources are allocated. The Council continues to work closely with the Voluntary Sector to co-design new and improved partnership infrastructure via PEG and the root and branch review they are currently undertaking. The Council's partnership work also includes the development of a New Partnership Plan (recently approved) and it continues to work hard to strengthen and improve relationships with all our partners. The previous administration cut grants services to only 39 organisations funding 50 projects, to £2.6million per year. This has been increased to £4.5million a year with the transformed *Mayor's Community* and *Mayor's Small* grants scheme, which will see 86 organisations delivering 110 projects.
- Under the previous administration, the 2021 LGA Peer Review stated that: "Those in the Council reflect that partnership working came to the fore during the pandemic and continues to go from strength to strength for the benefit of residents and businesses and it was made clear to the peer team that partners are strongly committed to the ambitions of the Place". **Which was in large part a commentary on statutory and health partnerships. The latest LGA report states that these 'statutory and health partnerships are of a good quality with health partners in particular referencing the strength of relationships in place with adult social care. These partnerships were strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic, when an operational management group with health and care leaders was established. This strengthened trust has led to more effective partnership working which has resulted in improvements in many areas including reducing the number of delayed transfers from acute settings'. The corporate peer challenge report also referenced the council relationship with the Metropolitan Police**



stating that ‘the Council’s community safety work is considered sector leading by the Police who highly value their professional working relationship with the Council’. It is therefore not an accurate reflection of the LGA report to infer that partnership working under the previous administration was stronger.

**This Council believes:**

- The Action Plan’s proposal of a Tower Hamlets Women Commission **must ensure that** ~~is a completely inadequate response to the lack of~~ female voices and those of people with different backgrounds to Aspire’s Cabinet members **are effectively engaged** during ~~in~~ decision-making processes.
  
- There are further commitments that are directly relevant to and supportive of the need to improve the profile of women in the Council and public life generally. These comprise:
  - Working with the LGA’s Be a Councillor Campaign to encourage residents (especially women and those from under-represented groups) to stand for election,
  
  - conducting a review of terms of reference for committees based on best practice including the appointment of women to lead in the Council,
  
  - all parties will be encouraged to support this campaign and publish how they will actively encourage women candidates,
  
  - new initiatives to capture feedback from women regarding their experience of contributing to council meetings,
  
  - better codifying dedicated time for staff led group chairs to develop staff equalities networks,
  
  - review and re-run relevant staff and member awareness programmes.
  
- The Action Plan ~~does not adequately~~ addresses the LGA’s recommendation that in the case of both grants and property disposals there should be involvement and oversight from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with there also being an ability to ‘call in’ decisions **in line with the Council’s Constitution.**

- **Both grants and property disposals can be and are scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As with all Member level decisions they can be called in.**
- The process proposed for “reviewing” the Mayor’s Office **will follow the LGA Peer Review Recommendations.** ~~will not do anything to end either the perception or the reality of a “council within a council” culture identified by many staff and the LGA Peer Review Team.~~
- In the absence of meaningful cross-party engagement or even discussions by the Corporate Leadership Team with Opposition councillors, residents can have no confidence in the draft Action Plan. **Therefore, the Chief Executive has been liaising with Group Leaders on the Council about attending a meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss the Corporate Challenge Review Report and Action Plan.**

**This council resolves:**

- To **welcome the LGA Peer Review report and agree the comprehensive** ~~withdraw the draft Action Plan and instruct the Corporate Leadership Team to engage with all Opposition councillors on the progress of the Action Plan. about what would be a realistic and useful set of changes to meet the criticism of Tower Hamlets Council’s governance and to bring back a new Action Plan to Full Council within three months.~~

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

The motion as amended by Councillor Maium Talukdar was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

**RESOLVED:**

**This council notes:**

- An LGA Peer Review is designed to provide a rigorous critical-friend review.
- The LGA Corporate Peer Review is entirely independent of the Council and examines the performance of the Council holistically examining all of the Council’s key performance metrics and their performance against them as well as addressing structure, the political interface, governance, leadership of place and organisation culture. The peer review is conducted by senior figures in the world of local government that in our case included Labour’s Steve Bullock (ex-directly elected mayor of Lewisham) and Carolyn Downs who spent many years as Chief Executive of Brent, has previously been Chief executive of the LGA, Chief Executive of the Legal Services Commission and Deputy Permanent Secretary and Director General for Ministry of Justice. The Comment also ignores the fact that subsequent to the LGA review the Council underwent a further independent inspection and improved its

performance for Investors In People confirming that the organisation had a robust and healthy approach to its staff and staff management.

- As you would expect the LGA peer group provided useful narrative in the report itself and offer valuable recommendations regarding the political and executive management of the council.
- In fact it was a well-considered balanced report that compares well with recent LGA reports into other local authorities given the unique social and economic profile of the Borough.
- The report concluded that the new administration:
  - had provided a fresh impetus to the Council,
  - Members and Officers had done well to delivery of election promises to date including free school meals and implementation of the educational maintenance allowance,
  - had a sound financial base.
  - had an ambitious set of priorities that were widely understood by Members, Officers and Partners,
  - Praised the Councils Communications team,
  - Had a highly skilled, dedicated workforce evidently committed to delivering the best outcomes for the Borough,

Their report also:

- Commended the Council for developing a three year financial plan which will enable investment in services and priority areas once completed.
- Commended the Council for some very effective partnership working in Tower Hamlets
- Recognised statutory partnership working to be particularly strong.
- Commended the council for being committed to being a learning organisation with a genuine appetite to explore and adopt best practice.

- Acknowledged that the council demonstrated a high degree of organisational maturity in its positive response to critical challenge.
  - Commended the Council for creating the Transformation Board.
- That the LGA Peer Review agreed with the concerns that had been raised with it in advance of the review by the Mayor and the current CEO that “there are ‘two councils’ in operation at Tower Hamlets which is impacting on the speed and effectiveness of decision making.”
- The LGA also expressed concerns around trust, sign off of decisions and delays to decision making.
- This was a legacy of the previous administration and Mayor who delegated significant mayoral powers to officers, which in our opinion left behind a culture of two councils. By contrast, the LGA concluded that ‘The Mayor is providing strong political leadership and is seen as approachable by both members and officers alike. Cabinet members are passionate about delivering the council’s priorities and want what is best for the residents across the borough’.
- The very positive IIP inspection that followed the LGA review suggests that the two-council culture issue is being addressed quickly and constructively and the new management team are bringing the staff with them on an improvement journey.
- The Action Plan report includes a review of the Mayor’s office which has already been completed leading to savings for the Council.
- The Mayor has empowered the Council, through strong central leadership and strategic direction, which has enabled the Council to reinvest in services. His Office has worked with services across the Council to deliver one of the most ambitious, progressive and expansive policy programmes seen in Local Government.
- The 2023 LGA peer review makes clear that there has been a very considerable churn in senior management since May 2022 – which is not uncommon following a change of political and managerial leadership’ and it noted that the Council’s recruitment process was well underway.
- During this period the Council has successfully embarked upon a major transformation and improvement programme, significantly improved its financial position, secured long overdue audit sign off of Council accounts, improved its IIP rating and supported the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.
- The actions included in the Action Plan are drawn directly from the 70+ positive suggestions and recommendations contained within the LGA

report. All of these have been addressed, often using the wording in the report to frame the action. To this extent there was limited necessity for content discussion. All of the LGA suggestions and recommendations are to be addressed via specific actions. This does not preclude collaboration or engagement in respect of the development of solutions and project leads are encouraged to engage all relevant stakeholders where practical. The CEO has extended an invitation to members of the Council to discuss the LGA Peer Review findings. The Corporate Peer Action Plan will be the subject of review by the Overview and Scrutiny committee on a regular basis. The first date for the committee to consider progress in relation to the action plan is currently being scheduled and will be revisited on a quarterly basis. This approach has been agreed with the Chair of the overview scrutiny committee and further details will be available on the councils committee website.

- Opposition councillors are being invited to attend a meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss the Corporate Challenge Review Report and Action Plan.
- The peer review noted how scrutiny is conducted and found “the chair of the scrutiny committee and all sub committees are currently from the majority ruling party (Aspire) as is common practice. Similarly, it notes the absence of women in the Cabinet despite Aspire offering positions to opposition female councillors which were refused.
- The Action Plan put forward in November sets out actions to define current best practice in relation to chairing, membership, and cross party working in and of committees including the Overview & Scrutiny Committee its Sub-Committees and the Audit Committee. It will conduct a review of current terms of reference for committees based on best practice including the appointment of women to lead or undertake senior political positions within the council. The Mayor will receive recommendations from that review and agree any necessary actions. The Mayor’s conclusions will be published.
- The Audit Committee has already considered the CIPFA recommendations on how its membership should be structured and agreed changes to ensure it remains robust and effective.
- In 2022 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to Cllr Sabina Khan’s appointment as a Scrutiny Lead. This year again the position was offered to a female opposition councillor. It is unfortunate that this was refused and a male labour Councillor was proposed.
- The report notes—that relationships with some third sector/voluntary partners “have weakened” possibly due to the introduction of the new community grant programme which has increased the number of organisations who can access Council grants.
- The Council recognises the need to maintain good working relationships with all voluntary sector organisations where possible but also recognises that it may not be possible to please everyone when

making structural decisions about the way in which resources are allocated. The Council continues to work closely with the Voluntary Sector to co-design new and improved partnership infrastructure via PEG and the root and branch review they are currently undertaking. The Council's partnership work also includes the development of a New Partnership Plan (recently approved) and it continues to work hard to strengthen and improve relationships with all our partners. The previous administration cut grants services to only 39 organisations funding 50 projects, to £2.6million per year. This has been increased to £4.5million a year with the transformed *Mayor's Community* and *Mayor's Small* grants scheme, which will see 86 organisations delivering 110 projects.

- Under the previous administration, the 2021 LGA Peer Review stated that: "Those in the Council reflect that partnership working came to the fore during the pandemic and continues to go from strength to strength for the benefit of residents and businesses and it was made clear to the peer team that partners are strongly committed to the ambitions of the Place". Which was in large part a commentary on statutory and health partnerships. The latest LGA report states that these 'statutory and health partnerships are of a good quality with health partners in particular referencing the strength of relationships in place with adult social care. These partnerships were strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic, when an operational management group with health and care leaders was established. This strengthened trust has led to more effective partnership working which has resulted in improvements in many areas including reducing the number of delayed transfers from acute settings'. The corporate peer challenge report also referenced the council relationship with the Metropolitan Police stating that 'the Council's community safety work is considered sector leading by the Police who highly value their professional working relationship with the Council'. It is therefore not an accurate reflection of the LGA report to infer that partnership working under the previous administration was stronger.

**This Council believes:**

- The Action Plan's proposal of a Tower Hamlets Women Commission must ensure that female voices and those of people with different backgrounds to Aspire's Cabinet members are effectively engaged during in decision-making processes.
- There are further commitments that are directly relevant to and supportive of the need to improve the profile of women in the Council and public life generally. These comprise:
  - Working with the LGA's Be a Councillor Campaign to encourage residents (especially women and those from under-represented groups) to stand for election,

- conducting a review of terms of reference for committees based on best practice including the appointment of women to lead in the Council,
  - all parties will be encouraged to support this campaign and publish how they will actively encourage women candidates,
  - new initiatives to capture feedback from women regarding their experience of contributing to council meetings,
  - better codifying dedicated time for staff led group chairs to develop staff equalities networks,
  - review and re-run relevant staff and member awareness programmes.
- The Action Plan addresses the LGA's recommendation that in the case of both grants and property disposals there should be involvement and oversight from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with there also being an ability to 'call in' decisions in line with the Council's Constitution.
  - Both grants and property disposals can be and are scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As with all Member level decisions they can be called in.
  - The process proposed for "reviewing" the Mayor's Office will follow the LGA Peer Review Recommendations.
  - In the absence of meaningful cross-party engagement or even discussions by the Corporate Leadership Team with Opposition councillors, residents can have no confidence in the draft Action Plan. Therefore, the Chief Executive has been liaising with Group Leaders on the Council about attending a meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss the Corporate Challenge Review Report and Action Plan.

**This council resolves:**

- To welcome the LGA Peer Review report and agree the comprehensive Action Plan and instruct the Corporate Leadership Team to engage with all councillors on the progress of the Action Plan.

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

### **9.1 Report of the Executive: Youth Justice Board Annual Report**

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning, presented the annual report. He outlined the achievements of the Youth Justice Board before members added their comments.

**RESOLVED:**

Council **AGREED:**

- 1) the Youth Justice Plan set out in Appendix 1 to the Youth Justice Board report attached to the cover sheet.

**9.2 Report of the Executive: Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes**

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost-of-living introduced the report. He stated the report set out the proposed Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes. He said this formed part of the Budget and Policy framework which required approval by Council. Members of the Council commented on the report.

**RESOLVED:**

Council **AGREED** to:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Reduce the current 100% discount awarded to unoccupied and unfurnished and uninhabitable dwellings to zero (0%) for the financial year 2024/25 onwards.
2. From 1 April 2024, amend the application of the levy of 100% premium for long-term empty properties to 1 year reducing this from the current 2 years.
3. From 1 April 2024 levy an additional premium on long-term empty property vacant for over 5 years at the maximum permitted level of 200%. The resulting charge will be 300% of the standard Council Tax.
4. From 1 April 2024 levy an additional premium on long-term empty property vacant for over 10 years at the maximum permitted level of 300%. The resulting charge will be 400% of the standard Council Tax.
5. Council be given the discretion, delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to reduce or waive the long-term empty premium charge in exceptional circumstances.
6. Give 12 months' notice that the Council will introduce a second home premium of 100% from 1 April 2025.



**10. OTHER BUSINESS****10.1 Proportionality and Allocation of Places on Committees of the Council 2023/24**

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the report. He stated that due to a change in the political composition of the Council, with a member of the Labour Group becoming an independent (ungrouped) Member, the Council had to review the allocation of places on Committees and other bodies covered by the proportionality requirements as set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Members of the Council commented on the report.

**RESOLVED:**

Council **AGREED** to:

1. Consider the review of proportionality as at Section 3 of this report and the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub-Committees for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24 as set out at paragraph 3.6.
2. Note the Committees set out for the municipal year 2023/24 listed in paragraph 3.6 as agreed at the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2023.
3. Agree any changes to the memberships (and substitutes) of those Committees as tabled at this Council meeting for approval.
4. To note that the Monitoring Officer is authorised to approve the appointment of Councillors required to fill positions that fall vacant during the municipal year in line with the proportionality arrangements set out in this report from nominations received from the political groups.
5. Agree that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to approve the appointment of ungrouped Councillors to any committee places not allocated by the Council to a political group, after consultation with those Councillors and the Speaker of the Council where there is only one application for the position (where there is more than one application these will be presented to Council for decision).
6. **AGREED and APPROVED** the appointment of Councillor Peter Golds to the General Purposes Committee and Councillor Nathalie Bienfait to the Strategic Development Committee from nominations tabled at the meeting.

**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 council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for 6 years under the previous administration.

#### **Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost-of-living**

The council has signed off audited accounts for financial years 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. The council has published draft accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 – these accounts are subject to audit.

#### **Supplementary question from Councillor Amin Rahman**

Can you give us an update on the Accounts for 2023?

#### **Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost-of-living**

The 2022/23 draft accounts are expected to be published by the end of January 2024 – which will also be subject to audit.

### **11.2 Question from Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury**

Can the Cabinet Member follow up on suggestions at the recent Health and Wellbeing Board that housing officers be part of the consultation in combatting drugs work?

#### **Response of Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care**

As part of the Combatting Drugs Partnership strategy, Housing Officers have been engaged as part of the strategy development. The Housing Senior Management Team considered the priority areas on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 and the fuller draft document was circulated for them to comment. Housing officers were also present at the initial workshop on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2023. The Hostels Forum was consulted on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. A further discussion is planned for Tower Hamlets Homes officers to comment on the draft strategy.

The strategy should be completed in February and each area will have an action plan and group that oversees the delivery of actions sitting beneath the strategy. One of the priorities identified is to provide settings that sustain recovery - housing colleagues across all service areas will be invited to help develop actions within that area, providing future opportunities to shape the direction of services and our approach as a partnership.

**11.3 Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir**

Residents in Wharton House in Bethnal Green East recently went without heating and hot water for weeks, and in some cases over a month. In an emergency such as this can the Lead Member tell us what the council doing to a) ensure that the registered provider, in this case One Housing is supporting residents and b) deploy its own resources to assist those most vulnerable.

**Response of Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding**

The outage at Wharton House was caused by a defective boiler that unfortunately took several weeks to repair. One Housing Riverside was in regular contact with residents to provide updates on the progress of the work as well supporting them with a Resident Liaison Officer who was on hand to provide information and individual support for those that needed it. Portable heaters were also provided by One Housing for those residents that required them. We are also aware One Housing Riverside was communicating with the Mayor's Office to keep them aware of changes in the scheduled completion date, and reassurance that compensation would be provided to residents once the repairs had been completed.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir**

What can the council do to protect the residents and hold registered providers accountable?

**Response of Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding**

The effect of a service failure could mean residents are affected in a multitude of different ways. Where that happens, it is incumbent on RPs to support, and where necessary, compensate residents using their own resources. If for any reason that does not happen, we will liaise the RP concerned to help residents get the support they need. If an RP refuses to comply, we will encourage residents to raise a complaint with the RP concerned using their formal Complaints Procedure. Once this process has been exhausted residents can then refer the RP to the Housing Ombudsman Service for further investigation and enforcement action if necessary.

Officers are working with the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum that consists of the main RPs in the borough, (including One Housing Riverside), to have a protocol in place for communicating service failures. Where a failure is reported that is likely to have an adverse effect on residents within their housing stock RPs have agreed to notify residents as well as the Council and the Lead Member as soon as possible. The notification should include details of the nature of the problem, what they doing to resolve it, how they are

supporting affected residents and when they expect the problem to be rectified.

#### **11.4 Question from Councillor Marc Francis**

Can the Mayor and Lead Member provide details of the number of applications that were in the queue awaiting an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment in each month since April 2022? It would also be helpful to know how many assessments were carried out (a) within and (b) outside the two-month target time, broken down by (i) Homelessness and (ii) Lettings in each of 2022/23 and so far in 2023/24?

#### **Response of Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding**

Unfortunately, the team does not hold the historical data requested regarding how many housing need assessments (along with our other non-housing need assessment tasks) are received per month, when they are allocated or when advice reports are completed, however we can provide data relating to the numbers of people still on the waiting list covering the period requested:

Homeless waiting list – 13 total

Aug 23 – 4

Oct 23 – 2

Nov 23 – 6

Dec 23 – 1

Lettings cases waiting list – 170 total

June 23 – 20

July 23 – 16

Aug 23 – 32

Sep 23 – 38

Oct 23 – 17

Nov 23 – 30

Dec 23 – 11

Jan 24 – 6

**Supplementary question from Councillor Marc Francis**

Thank you for the figures. A considerable amount of people are still waiting for an OT assessment and have been told it will be several more months before they are assessed. What is being done to resolve this?

**Response of Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding**

This is one of many services where we have listened to staff as well as residents. We are aware the service needs enhanced investment and as such we'll be taking this up with the Corporate and Divisional Director for Housing, to reduce the wait times for these vulnerable people.

**11.5 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed**

I thank the current administration for introducing a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order to curb drug related Anti-Social behaviour, particularly the use of NOX (laughing gas) on our streets. Can the Lead Member set out the impact this has had in addressing the problem to date?

**Response of Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**

In May 2021, following growing public concerns about the use of Nitrous Oxide and associated antisocial behaviour, the Council introduced a Public Space Protection Order. One of only two in London. This allowed Council Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to people using or in possession of psychoactive substances, including nitrous oxide, where they were causing or likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance, or annoyance to members of the public. Between May 2021 and November 2023, 220 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to address this issue.

In November 2023, the Government changed the Misuse of Drugs Act, to include Nitrous Oxide as a Class C drug. This makes Nitrous Oxide illegal to possess and takes it outside of the scope of the current PSPO. We will continue to support police enforcement of this drug through THEOs and CCTV.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed**

Are there any awareness programmes for residents as well as users?

**Response of Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**

In addition to our enforcement work, and in partnership Queen Mary's University, Barts Health NHS Trust, the Police, and Osmani Trust, we have

developed our groundbreaking “Know the Risks” project. The project has three main aims.

(1) Prevention through borough-wide educational workshops to raise awareness of the dangers of NOX abuse in diverse settings including schools, colleges, places of worship, and community hubs. These workshops are the first of their kind in the UK. These prevention workshops have already reached 2000 individuals, with plans to further embed them in schools.

We are working with the police to establish crucial referral pathways to connect individuals with our prevention and diversion program. This is to steer young individuals away from the path of criminalisation. All our enforcement officers have undergone specialised training to deliver harm minimisation and interventions on the street. The Met Police are seeking to replicate our successful model in other London boroughs.

(2) The second objective is to improve the NOX-treatment pathway in East London hospitals. This is to address the rising health burden associated with NOX-related harm. At the Royal London Hospital, this care pathway supported around 200 patients in the last year.

(3) The 3<sup>rd</sup> objective centres on advancing research led by Professor Alastair Noyce (our partner) into the significant health effects of NOX.

Our response to the dangers posed by Nitrous Oxide are holistic and collaborative, addressing challenges in our borough. Through education, diversion, and proactive healthcare measures, we strive to create a safer and more informed community.

### **11.6 Question from Councillor Mufedah Bustin**

Following the allocation of NCIL to fund the Mayor’s Community Grants programme, when will councillors receive copies of:

- 1) the legal advice provided to the Mayor validating the use of NCIL in this way
- 2) the breakdown of NCIL allocation to grants at a project and location level

### **Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost-of-living**

No external legal advice was obtained regarding the use of NCIL (Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy) for the Grants process. Internal legal input and approval can be seen in the Cabinet Report from June 2023 that adopted the new NCIL approach. The external legal advice referred to at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the Mayor’s Community Grants Programme was in relation to the grants process itself, not the funding source. In a response to a previous members enquiry regarding that legal advice, the

response confirmed that the advice is subject to legal professional privilege and is therefore considered to be exempt from disclosure at the present time.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Mufedah Bustin**

Why is the legal advice exempt from disclosure?

**Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost-of-living**

We don't know the details of the member enquiry but a briefing note on the breakdown of the NCIL allocation to grants in each NCIL area is being drafted to go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee later this year.

Questions 11.8 to 11.27 were not put due to lack of time. The written responses are attached to at **Appendix A**.

**12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Motions 12.1 and 12.2 were not considered due to lack of time.

The meeting ended at 10.08 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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### Item 11: Member Questions and Answers

11.1	<p><b>Question from Councillor Amin Rahman</b></p>	<p>Could the Lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for 6 years under the previous administration.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council has signed off audited accounts for financial years 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. The council has published draft accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 – these accounts are subject to audit. The 2022/23 draft accounts are expected to be published by the end of January 2024 – which will also be subject to audit.</p>
11.2	<p><b>Question from Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury</b></p>	<p>Can the Cabinet Member follow up on suggestions at the recent Health and Wellbeing Board that housing officers be part of the consultation in combatting drugs work?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>As part of the Combatting Drugs Partnership strategy, Housing Officers have been engaged as part of the strategy development. The Housing Senior Management Team considered the priority areas on the 6th of November 2023 and the fuller draft document was circulated for them to comment. Housing officers were also present at the initial workshop on the 27th of July 2023. The Hostels Forum was consulted on the 19th of October 2023. A further discussion is planned for Tower Hamlets Homes officers to comment on the draft strategy.</p> <p>The strategy should be completed in February and each area will have an action plan and group that oversees the delivery of actions sitting beneath the strategy. One of the priorities identified is to provide settings that sustain recovery - housing colleagues across all service areas will be invited to help develop actions within that area, providing future opportunities to shape the direction of services and our approach as a partnership.</p>
11.3	<p><b>Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir</b></p>	<p>Residents in Wharton House in Bethnal Green East recently went without heating and hot water for weeks, and in some cases over a month. In an emergency such as this can the Lead Member tell us what the council doing to a) ensure that the registered provider, in this</p>

		<p>case One Housing is supporting residents and b) deploy its own resources to assist those most vulnerable.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The outage at Wharton House was caused by a defective boiler that unfortunately took several weeks to repair. One Housing Riverside was in regular contact with residents to provide updates on the progress of the work as well supporting them with a Resident Liaison Officer who was on hand to provide information and individual support for those that needed it. Portable heaters were also provided by One Housing for those residents that required them. We are also aware One Housing Riverside was communicating with the Mayor's Office to keep them abreast of changes in the scheduled completion date, and reassurance that compensation would be provided to residents once the repairs had been completed.</p> <p>Officers are working with the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum that consists of the main RPs in the borough, (including One Housing Riverside), to have a protocol in place for communicating service failures. Where a failure is reported that is likely to have an adverse effect on residents within their housing stock RPs have agreed to notify residents as well as the Council and the Lead Member as soon as possible. The notification should include details of the nature of the problem, what they doing to resolve it, how they are supporting affected residents and when they expect the problem to be rectified.</p> <p>RPs have also agreed to keep the Council and residents updated as remedial works progress and outline details of any issues likely to delay completion dates conveyed to residents. This will ensure the Council has advance knowledge of issues that residents are likely to refer to Members so they can be armed with information to respond to any complaints received.</p> <p>The effect of a service failure could mean residents are affected in a multitude of different ways. Where that happens, it is incumbent on RPs to support, and where necessary, compensate residents using their own resources. If for any reason that does not happen, we will liaise the RP concerned to help residents get the support they need. If an RP refuses to comply, we will encourage residents to raise a complaint with the RP concerned using their formal Complaints Procedure. Once this</p>
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		<p>process has been exhausted residents can then refer the RP to the Housing Ombudsman Service for further investigation and enforcement action if necessary.</p>
<p><b>11.4</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Marc Francis</b></p>	<p>Can the Mayor and Lead Member provide details of the number of applications that were in the queue awaiting an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment in each month since April 2022? It would also be helpful to know how many assessments were carried out (a) within and (b) outside the two-month target time, broken down by (i) Homelessness and (ii) Lettings in each of 2022/23 and so far in 2023/24?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The team does not hold the historical data requested regarding how many housing need assessments (along with our other non-housing need assessment tasks) are received per month, when they are allocated or when advice reports are completed, however we can provide data relating to the numbers of people still on the waiting list covering the period requested:</p> <p>Homeless waiting list – 13 total  Aug 23 – 4  Oct 23 – 2  Nov 23 – 6  Dec 23 – 1</p> <p>Lettings cases waiting list – 170 total  June 23 – 20  July 23 – 16  Aug 23 – 32  Sep 23 – 38  Oct 23 – 17  Nov 23 – 30  Dec 23 – 11  Jan 24 – 6</p> <p>Occupational Therapists (OT) carry out a wide range of duties in addition to housing need assessments, including viewings, new build adaptations and equipment follow-ups, as well as duties related to social care.</p> <p>By its very nature OT assessments are time consuming as it often involves home visits and this means a limited number can be completed each day. The number of requests for assessments involving autistic household member(s) has increased significantly, which requires a</p>

		<p>home visit and often in non-school hours which can limit appointment time.</p> <p>Admin support for the team is being sourced, which will free up OTs to concentrate on housing needs assessments rather than diary management.</p> <p>Furthermore, since December new referrals are being filtered to make sure referrals are appropriate i.e. applicant is mobility impaired and requires an OT assessment.</p>
11.5	<p><b>Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed</b></p>	<p>I thank the current administration for introducing a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order to curb drug related Anti-Social behaviour, particularly the use of NOX (laughing gas) on our streets. Can the Lead Member set out the impact this has had in addressing the problem to date?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>In May 2021, following growing public concerns about the use of Nitrous Oxide and associated antisocial behaviour, the Council introduced a Public Space Protection Order. One of only two in London. This allowed Council Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to people using or in possessing psychoactive substances, including nitrous oxide, where they were causing or likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance, or annoyance to members of the public. Between May 2021 and November 2023, 220 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to address this issue.</p> <p>In November 2023, the Government changed the Misuse of Drugs Act, to include Nitrous Oxide as a Class C drug. This makes Nitrous Oxide illegal to possess and takes it outside of the scope of the current PSPO. We will continue to support police enforcement of this drug through THEOs and CCTV.</p> <p>In addition to our enforcement work, and in partnership Queen Mary’s University, Barts Health NHS Trust, the Police, and Osmani Trust, we have developed our groundbreaking “Know the Risks” project. The project has three main aims.</p> <p>(1) Prevention through borough-wide educational workshops to raise awareness of the dangers of NOX abuse in diverse settings including schools, colleges, places of worship, and community hubs. These workshops are the first of their kind in the UK.</p>

		<p>These prevention workshops have already reached 2000 individuals, with plans to further embed them in schools.</p> <p>We are working with the police to establish crucial referral pathways to connect individuals with our prevention and diversion program. This is to steer young individuals away from the path of criminalisation. All our enforcement officers have undergone specialised training to deliver harm minimisation and interventions on the street. The Met Police are seeking to replicate our successful model in other London boroughs.</p> <p>(2) the second objective is to improve the NOX-treatment pathway in East London hospitals. This is to address the rising health burden associated with NOX-related harm. At the Royal London Hospital, this care pathway supported around 200 patients in the last year.</p> <p>(3) The 3rd objective centres on advancing research led by Professor Alastair Noyce (our partner) into the significant health effects of NOX.</p> <p>Our response to the dangers posed by Nitrous Oxide are holistic and collaborative, addressing challenges in our borough. Through education, diversion, and proactive healthcare measures, we strive to create a safer and more informed community.</p>
11.6	<p><b>Question from Councillor Mufedah Bustin</b></p>	<p>Following the allocation of NCIL to fund the Mayor’s Community Grants programme, when will councillors receive copies of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the legal advice provided to the Mayor validating the use of NCIL in this way</li> <li>2) the breakdown of NCIL allocation to grants at a project and location level</li> </ol> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>No external legal advice was obtained regarding the use of NCIL (Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy) for the Grants process. Internal legal input and approval can be seen in the Cabinet Report from June 2023 that adopted the new NCIL approach. The external legal advice referred to at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the Mayor’s Community Grants Programme was in relation to the grants process itself, not the funding source. In a response to a previous members enquiry regarding that legal advice, the response confirmed that the advice is subject to legal professional privilege and is</p>

		<p>therefore considered to be exempt from disclosure at the present time.</p> <p>A briefing note on the breakdown of the NCIL allocation to grants in each NCIL area is being drafted to go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee early this year.</p>
11.7	<p><b>Question from Councillor Harun Miah</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member provide an update on progress with senior management recruitment and achieving a workforce to reflect the community - in Tower Hamlets?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>7 senior management posts have recently been advertised. Recruitment is ongoing and three appointments have been made so far. Two of the candidates appointed will increase our representation of Black, Asian, and Multi-Ethnic staff at senior level.</p>
11.8	<p><b>Question from Councillor Asma Islam</b></p>	<p>Could the Mayor provide us with an update of the conversations he has had with THCH regarding the condition of Vollasky house?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Mayor and his office, along with Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury have been in correspondence with THCH about issues relating to a number of properties in Vollasky House.</p> <p>Mr Speaker, recently the Mayor's team worked with THCH to support residents of Vollasky House affected by a long-standing water leak. They helped to establish the source of the leak as well as ensure repairs to the damaged ceiling were carried out in a timely fashion while residents were moved to a place of safety.</p> <p>Mr Speaker, the Mayor is aware of the wider problems in the block, particularly the roof of the building, and despite having limited powers, is committed to getting this addressed. As the Mayor's Lead Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding, I have reached out to THCH about a number of their problematic blocks including Vollasky House. I have been contacted by many residents aggrieved about the lack of support with repairs and general maintenance. I hope THCH will respond so these concerns lead to swift remedial action.</p>

		<p>Mr speaker, I want to remind Labour Councillors that it was the Mayor's team that were on the ground supporting residents of Vollasky House during Christmas holidays. It was the Mayor and his team who stood up for residents and pressed THCH for support, and it was the Mayor and his team that have pushed for better accountability of Housing Associations like THCH.</p>
11.9	<p><b>Question from Councillor Abdul Mannan</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member update us on progress with the recommendations following the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place in September last year?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The LGA published their report in December. This set out 18 core recommendations. The Council published its action plan and supporting statement on the same day on the Council Web Site, welcoming the report and outlining its response to it. The Action Plan sets out a wide range of actions responding to the core recommendations, each action linked to the relevant LGA recommendation. Some critical actions have already been delivered such as the long outstanding sign off of historic council accounts and the publication of Annual Governance Statements. Also, the Council is well advanced with the preparation of its Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is on target for final approval in February 2024. The indicative dates for delivery of the actions appearing on the Action Plan will be updated at the end of January following the completion of scoping work currently underway. Dialogue has started with the LGA to programme a light touch progress check in the summer and we hope to have agreed the date with the LGA by the end of January.</p>
11.10	<p><b>Question from Councillor Asma Begum</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member inform me what new investment there is in the 2024-25 council budget related to the council's net zero commitments?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Previously we have agreed multi-year projects as part of the Mayors Energy Fund to deliver net zero carbon projects, these projects include renewable energy generation such as photovoltaic panels on Council buildings, Community Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Generation project to support community groups, Residential Energy Efficiency Project to support our residents and a tree planting scheme to improve biodiversity in the borough, these projects are currently being delivered.</p>

		<p>There are no new investment planned in the 2024-25 council budget related to the council's net zero commitments. We have £3 million in the carbon fund that is unallocated and will go towards funding new net zero carbon commitments, these will include behaviour change projects for the community and residents so that we can take them on the journey to net zero, further investment to improve council assets to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs to the Council, support schools to achieve net zero carbon, investigate decarbonisation opportunities across all sectors and pilot innovation such</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Material re-use initiatives – project exploring sustainable city living and low waste initiatives</li> <li>• City Soil – food waste scheme to soil</li> <li>• Biodiesel - cooking oil refining to provide biodiesel to LBTH fleet, power production through generators</li> <li>• Embodied Carbon Construction project – pilot programme to provide space for material storage resulting from demolition / construction activities</li> </ul> <p>We will also explore all the external grant funding available and in most cases these require match funding by the Council, therefore we will need to carefully target our investment in this area to ensure we maximise the opportunity and get best value for money.</p>
11.11	<p><b>Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain</b></p>	<p>Could the Lead Member share feedback from the Women In Business Festive Fair last month? What was on offer and how well was it attended?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Women in Business Festive Fair 2023 ran from 16 – 23rd December in the Grocer's Wing of the Town Hall with the aim to support local women in the borough to showcase their businesses, develop a new business and/or access business support seminars. To drive footfall and support families to attend, art &amp; craft sessions, facepainting, a jazz band and dance performances also took place.</p> <p>The event also supported the establishment of the new Town Hall in Whitechapel as a venue space for similar future events, and the marketing and promotion of Whitechapel and its local businesses and market traders by attracting visitors to shop, eat and play in the area.</p>



		<p>The event featured 25 women trading in a wide variety of items. These included Bangladeshi, Indian, and Pakistani jewellery and clothing, food, artwork, paintings, plants, gift sets, knitwear, bookmarks, scrapbooks, personalised bags and notebooks, embroidery frames, home-made gifts for keyrings, pincushions, jewellery boxes.</p> <p>The event generated great interest from the community, especially other local women who expressed an interest in future events. Footfall was highest at the weekend with 500+ attendees and over 2,000 people attended the event in total. 99% of the traders have indicated they would return to a similar event in the future.</p>
<p><b>11.12</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Rebekah Sultana</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member inform me what sort of actions are being taken to support individuals without housing during the winter months and whether the council could be take actions such as lowering the threshold in which Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) protocols can be initiated?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>This year has seen a steep increase in the need for SWEP in London due to lower temperatures.</p> <p>The Greater London Authority (GLA) holds responsibility for activating and deactivating SWEP. SWEP is provided for anyone rough sleeping in the borough during periods of temperatures being zero or below.</p> <p>The Council delivers SWEP through a mixture of commissioned services and partnerships with third sector service providers.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing emergency beds in hostels and day centres</li> <li>• The Street Outreach Team carrying out extra shifts</li> <li>• Mobilised additional capacity by working creatively and collaboratively across the council to deliver 'pop up' facilities and bedspaces in council owned buildings.</li> </ul> <p>These efforts are set to continue during cold weather periods and the further use of council buildings may be deemed necessary. Funding is being sought from central government to support these actions.</p>

		<p>Due to a rise in demand and loss of hostel capacity this year, it is unfortunately not possible to lower the threshold for accessing SWEP without increases in funding for rough sleeping services.</p> <p>The council deploys throughout the year a dedicated Street Outreach Service who identify rough sleepers on the street and work with them to find housing solutions even when SWEP is not activated</p>
<p><b>11.13</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan</b></p>	<p>Community safety is a huge concern, and this is felt quite strongly on the Isle of Dogs. The previous administration did very little to address crime and even less to save the only police station on the Island. Can the Lead Member tell us what he is going to do help Islanders feel safer?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Community Safety Partnership provides the strategic response to crime and antisocial behaviour occurring at a Borough level and at a locality level.</p> <p>Currently the Community Safety Division has:</p> <p>Dedicated council resources allocated to the Isle of Dogs to tackle crime and ASB, improve feelings of safety, provide reassurance and to work with the police, residents and partners.</p> <p>There is a dedicated team of Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers to patrol the Island, and a dedicated ASB/Community Safety officer to help with problem solving issues and to investigate ASB reports from residents. These officers work as part of a localities team with Safer Neighbourhoods' police, registered social landlord's residents and third sector partners. Our council officers attend all the local Ward Panel Meetings, and they undertake joint patrols with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team. This includes the use of the Council's outreach and engagement bus and running a series of safer surgeries across the Island. Where there are additional concerns, the council funded police officers, the Partnership Task Force are proactively tasked to the area.</p> <p>To provide a holistic response to issues of youth violence the service works closely in Partnership with organisations such as the Tower Hamlets Island Community Network. Recent work included an anti-robbery initiative focusing on DLR stations with Council officers, youth providers, working alongside British</p>

		<p>Transport Police and local housing providers. Over 275 Hours of additional detached and intensive targeted street-based youth work was delivered to support and protect young people and the wider community.</p> <p>The MPS Estates Strategy is currently under review. There is an ongoing discussion with Police about opportunities for local neighbourhoods' police officers to utilise Council buildings/assets to improve access for residents and visibility of police on the Island.</p>
11.14	<p><b>Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain</b></p>	<p>How many GCSE booster classes have the council supported schools in delivering since 2022?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council does not provide funding for GCSE booster classes. Where schools provide these, they are funded from the school's own budget.</p> <p>In addition, the Department of Education has provided two funding streams to all schools to assist pupils to catch up with their learning in recognition of the impact of the pandemic. One grant is the National Tutoring Programme for schools to access tuition partners and academic mentors, with schools contributing 50% of the costs. The other grant is the Recovery Premium which is used for any activity which enables pupils to catch up on their learning and make expected progress. Both grants can be used to support GSCE preparation.</p>
11.15	<p><b>Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled</b></p>	<p>Now that the independent investigation, initiated by 31 members of staff, into housing management across housing options and homelessness has concluded, can the Lead Member provide an update as to what will happen going forward.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The internal process to deal with the issues raised is ongoing. Senior management continue to meet with staff and trade union representatives to agree appropriate actions, including a review of the staffing structure and service delivery.</p>
11.16	<p><b>Question from Councillor James King</b></p>	<p>When is the council going to get round to fixing the front door of Padstow House on the Roche estate? It has been hanging off its hinges for six months.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p>

		Our Door Entry contractor ABCA attended on 12 January 2024 to make safe. They have raised a follow on order to carry out further repairs and have scheduled an appointment to return on 23 January 2024.
11.17	<b>Question from Councillor Abdul Mailk</b>	<p>Can the Lead Member provide a list of all the road safety and traffic management schemes on the Isle of Dogs delivered under the current Mayor and measures that are planned in the next 12 months?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>In the last 12 months the Transportation and Highways team has implemented the following schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New zebra crossing on Marsh Wall outside Novotel Hotel</li> <li>• New zebra crossing on Marsh Wall, west of junction with Mastmaker Road</li> <li>• Making permanent with amending timings an experimental school street at Arnhem Wharf School and Harbinger School.</li> <li>• In the next 12 months the following schemes are planned</li> <li>• New Zebra crossing on East Ferry Road adjacent to Canary Wharf College</li> <li>• New traffic calming measures on Casilla Rd &amp; Millharbour</li> <li>• New zebra crossing on Marsh Wall</li> </ul>
11.18	<b>Question from Councillor Amina Ali</b>	<p>What actions has the council taken to support residents and business owners affected by the recent flooding on Fish Island?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>During the 2 days after the flooding, the Economic Growth Team directly contacted all of the businesses affected to determine their position and immediate needs. Understandably, businesses were still working out exactly what damage had been caused and what the potential costs of reparation might be. The reparation cost estimates ranged from £1,500 to £35,000 at the time of speaking to the businesses.</p> <p>Details of the Government grant schemes accessible to businesses affected by flooding have been shared with all businesses. In summary:</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flooded households in eligible affected areas, who can apply for up to £500 cash to help with immediate costs.</li> <li>2. Households and businesses significantly affected, who will be eligible for 100% council tax and business rates relief for at least 3 months.</li> <li>3. Small-to-medium sized businesses in eligible affected areas, who can apply for up to £2,500 from the Business Recovery Grant to help them return quickly to business as usual.</li> <li>4. Eligible flood-hit property owners, who can apply for up to £5,000 to help make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding via the Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme.</li> <li>5. Farmers who have suffered uninsurable damage to their land will be able to apply for grants of up to £25,000 through the Farming Recovery Fund towards repair and reinstatement costs for farmers adversely affected by exceptional flooding.</li> </ol> <p>Officers from the Business Rates and Economic Growth Teams will support businesses to apply to these schemes: Government payments for communities affected by flooding.</p> <p>Since this time, the Economic Growth Team have been speaking with the Canals and Rivers Trust to clarify issues around liability and insurance position. This work is currently ongoing.</p>
11.19	<p><b>Question from Councillor Bellal Uddin</b></p>	<p>The previous administration had very little regard for Cubitt Town Library. This historic building has received a boost from Mayor Rahman and is now also operating as a much-needed Resident Hub. Is the Lead Member aware of plans to move the library service and if so, will he work to keep the provision in Cubitt Town?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>There are no plans for the immediate future to move the library or services. We are working closely with service users to expand and develop the resident hub model being delivered from Cubitt Town Library.</p> <p>There are plans to develop an Idea Store at Crossharbour site at which point we would stop using Cubitt Town as a library but would like to retain the historic building for other community purposes.</p>

11.20	<b>Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah</b>	<p>Can the Mayor give us an update on progress with Mulberry Academy London Dock?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council led construction of the new secondary school at London Dock, to be run by the Mulberry Academy Trust, remains on schedule for completion by late July 2024. It will therefore be ready to receive its first Year 7 intake in September 2024.</p> <p>Applications for admission to the new school are being administered through the council's co-ordinated arrangements, with parents of successful candidates to be notified on the 1st March 2024.</p>
11.21	<b>Question from Councillor Amy Lee</b>	<p>Can the Mayor tell me what representations he has made to relevant partners in regards to the boat the Ocean Diva?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>This matter was discussed with the Deputy Mayor and other ward Councillors on the Isle of Dogs when the original application was made. The Council's Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service submitted representations to Newham Council against the licence application in relation to noise concerns. The application was subsequently withdrawn by Ocean Diva and currently has not been resubmitted. We currently understand that the current proposals are not to have an embarkation or disembarkation point within Tower Hamlets. This matter is kept under review with Newham Council, who are the responsible authority for issuing relevant licences.</p>
11.22	<b>Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar</b>	<p>How many £100 free school vouchers were delivered to parents over the Christmas period?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council will be distributing vouchers to households with benefits related eligibility for free school meals as well as some additional households identified by schools. However, these were not distributed at Christmas.</p> <p>Due to the timing of additional payments from central government, it was decided that households would be better served by receiving additional funding between those two payments, timed for November and March.</p>

		<p>The tackling poverty team is currently liaising with schools to finalise numbers – expected to be in the region of 20,000 children – and will be sending vouchers to schools once all numbers have been returned.</p>
11.23	<p><b>Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member inform me how many times the housing emergency task force has met and its membership?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Given the extent of the challenges facing our residents and indeed, in cities across the country like London – it was agreed that a range of officer-led individual task and finish groups would be set up, providing a better and more targeted focus on specific housing issues for residents.</p> <p>Progress is routinely reported back to the Lead Member and to the Mayor, in order for them to provide a steer through 1-1 and portfolio meetings.</p> <p>The working groups which have been instigated include damp and mould, overcrowding, preparation for the enactment of the Social Housing Regulation Act, the insourcing of Tower Hamlets Homes and the establishment of resident engagement working groups, preparation for the operational impact of the draft Renters Reform Bill and a group which focuses on the transformation of the Housing Options Service.</p> <p>Additionally, there are regular Housing Away Days, held with senior officers, the Mayor and Lead Member which focus specifically on maximising the supply of affordable housing.</p>
11.24	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam</b></p>	<p>How many housing enforcement officers have been funded and resourced since 2022?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>We have employed two additional permanent enforcement Officers this year funded from the general revenue account. In addition we have 16 additional Officers funded through the current Housing Licensing schemes.</p>

11.25	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sabina Khan</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member provide an update on any actions taken by the tension monitoring group over the last three months?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Tension Monitoring Group (“TMG”) is a community led, council facilitated group established to monitor and address community tensions. Since the commencement of hostilities in the middle east on the 7th October, eight Tension Monitoring Group (TMG) meetings have been convened.</p> <p>The following activity has taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A joint TMG, and Council statement has been issued reinforcing the message that Tower Hamlets “stands together” and is not a place for hate, prejudice, or intolerance.</li> <li>• The TMG has proactively monitored incidents, social media activity and community concerns emerging from the conflict. This has included such issues as reported hate crime, graffiti, posters and the display of flags. This dialogue has enabled us to assess and report changes in community tensions in a systematic manner to the corporate leadership team.</li> <li>• Information provided by the TMG concerning protests being held in and outside the borough have enabled responses. The council and police have provided a uniformed reassuring presence at key locations e.g., faith centres, parks, and offices of political parties.</li> <li>• In the early stages of the conflict, a WhatsApp group was created for TMG members to provide updates on emerging incidents and for the Council to share actions being undertaken in live time. This was a useful tool to build confidence in the community that the council and its partners were addressing concerns as they arose.</li> <li>• The TMG membership has provided feedback and guidance for the Education Service and other partners to ensure young people are able to debate, discuss, protest, and express their views in a safe, legal and appropriate manner.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Terms of Reference of the TMG are subject to review to incorporate learning and feedback from members after this sustained period of activity.</li> </ul>
11.26	<b>Question from Councillor Nathalie Bienfait</b>	<p>How much progress has been made on installing new EV chargers across the borough?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please provide details of chargers installed in the last 12 months broken down by ward.</li> <li>Please provide details of plans to install chargers in the coming 12 months</li> <li>In both cases above, please provide the following information: about where and when chargers will be/were installed, what type of charger (e.g. fast/slow), where they are located on the pavement or street and whether/what proportion have a dedicated parking bay for them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>No new EV chargers have been installed in the last 12 months. Officers are bidding for external funding and procuring three new contracts to deliver approximately 2500 EV charging points over the next 3 years.</p> <p>There is a report going to cabinet on 31st Jan 2024, the delivery of EV is subject to cabinet approval.</p> <p>The plan for the next 12 months will depend on the terms of the new contracts, so we cannot confirm specifics at this time.</p> <p>Following a survey of the Borough, Officers have found 3000 potential slow charging point locations, resulting in 2000 being implemented as part of this project phase. In addition to this, 140 fast and 35 rapid charging point locations have been identified. However, these locations still need to be fully confirmed and amended following the required implementation systems, for example, the planning permission process. The current list is available upon request.</p>
11.27	<b>Question from Councillor Peter Golds</b>	<p>Pavements across the Isle of Dogs and elsewhere in the borough are increasingly being obstructed by abandoned lime bikes. These are a particular hazard to the disabled, those with sight impediments and parents with buggies. Many local authorities across London are introducing restrictions on these bikes to prevent the problems they create. Will Tower Hamlets consider implementing such restrictions?</p>

	<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Unfortunately, the ability to carry out enforcement against dockless operators, including Lime, is extremely limited due a lack of specific legislation in place governing their use. Whilst the Department for Transport have indicated that legislation will be introduced it is currently unclear whether this will take place before the forthcoming general election. At a London level, TfL in partnership with London Councils and individual boroughs is seeking to procure a joint contract for both e scooters and dockless bikes which will set out standards for operators to adhere to. Currently it is anticipated that this will be in place for Summer 2025. In the meantime, officers liaise on an ongoing basis with Lime, raising issues on where their bikes are causing an obstruction. If there are any particular hotspot areas these can be raised too, or also passed on directly to Lime by residents and councillors by contacting <a href="mailto:london-ops@li.me">london-ops@li.me</a></p>
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# Public Pack

COUNCIL, 28/02/2024

SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED)

## LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

### MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.08 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

#### Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Member)	Councillor Peter Golds (Member)
Councillor Faroque Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Iqbal Hossain (Member)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kabir Hussain (Member)
Councillor Leelu Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kamrul Hussain (Member)
Councillor Musthak Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain (Member)
Councillor Saied Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Asma Islam (Member)
Councillor Shafi Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Sirajul Islam (Member)
Councillor Suluk Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Ahmodul Kabir (Member)
Councillor Ohid Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled (Member)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar (Member)	Councillor Ahmodur Khan (Member)
Councillor Amina Ali (Member)	Councillor Sabina Khan (Member)
Councillor Asma Begum (Member)	Councillor James King (Member)
Councillor Maisha Begum (Member)	Councillor Amy Lee (Member)
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait (Member)	Councillor Abdul Malik (Member)
Councillor Rachel Blake (Member)	Councillor Abdul Mannan (Member)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin (Member)	Councillor Ana Miah (Member)
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Harun Miah (Member)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Amin Rahman (Member)
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Rebaka Sultana (Member)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Maium Talukdar (Member)
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Bellal Uddin (Member)
Councillor Marc Francis (Member)	Councillor Abdul Wahid (Member)

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

During the meeting the Speaker of the Council agreed to change the order of business. Specifically, Agenda Item 6 was taken before Agenda Item 5. For clarity the minutes are presented in the order the items appeared on the agenda.

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Abdal Ullah.

Councillor Ayas Miah joined the meeting online.

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

Ms Jill Bayley, Head of Safeguarding – Legal Services advised that the Standards Advisory Committee had agreed to a general dispensation to all Councillors in respect of matters relating to the Council Tax and also Housing where the Councillor (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council. Members did not therefore have to declare a DPI in respect of these matters.

There were no other Declarations of Interest.

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

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Jahed Choudhury stated that he would provide an update on his activities at the next ordinary meeting of the Council on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Best Value Inspection, the Corporate Peer Review, Awards the Council had been shortlisted for and the temporary appointment of Ms Linda Walker as the Director of Legal following the departure of Ms Fasan. The Chief Executive, Mr Steve Halsey read out the statement made by the Council following comments made in the national press about 'no go' areas.

## 4. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

There were no petitions listed for consideration for this meeting.

At this point the Speaker of the Council Proposed, seconded by Councillor Maium Talukdar, that under Procedure Rule 12.1 (c) the Order of Business be changed to take Agenda Item 6 (Designation of Monitoring Officer) before Agenda Item 5 (Budget and Council Tax 2024/25) due to the importance of having a Monitoring Officer in place before the main business of the meeting took place. This proposal was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

## 5. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

The Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living, **moved** the budget and council tax proposals of the Mayor and Executive as set out in the agenda pack, with Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning **seconding** the proposals. This included the amendments tabled at the meeting.

Councillor Marc Francis **moved** the Labour group amendment set out in the supplementary agenda, which was **seconded** by Councillor Sirajul Islam. Councillor Nathalie Bienfait also **moved** her amendment which was **seconded** by Councillor Peter Golds.

During the debate the Speaker of the Council adjourned the meeting from 21:39 to 21:48 due to disturbance from the public gallery. The Speaker then, in line with Paragraph 21 of the Council Procedure Rules, asked for the public gallery to be cleared for the remainder of the meeting.

Following debate, the amendments moved by Councillor Marc Francis and Councillor Nathalie Bienfait were put to a recorded vote and were rejected.

The substantive Budget Motion for 2024-25, including the Council Tax Resolution, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Investment Statements as well as the Capital Strategy report submitted by Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Councillor Saied Ahmed were put to a recorded vote and were **AGREED**.

**Decision:**

**Budget Motion:  
Revenue 2024-27 and Capital 2024-27**

1. To note a General Fund Revenue Budget of £462.606m and approve a Council Tax (Band D) of £1,204.11 (Council share) for 2024-25 as set out in the motion and Council Tax Resolution attached at Annex 1 to this report. This incorporates a 2.99% increase to the Tower Hamlets element of Council Tax and a 2% Adult Social Care precept for 2024-25.
2. To note the GLA precept as set out in the Council Tax Resolution is subject to the approval of the GLA Assembly at their meeting scheduled for 22 February, any changes as a result of that meeting will be made known to Council before the date of this meeting.
3. To note the change in the budget report appendices to reflect the final Local Government Finance Settlement grant allocation for the Social Care Grant, Services Grant and Public Health Grant. (Annex 2 Appendix 1A, 1B, 2, 3A and 6)
4. To note the Capital Programme, Housing Revenue Account budget and Dedicated Schools budget.
5. Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy 2024-25 5. To adopt the Treasury Management Strategy Statement set out in Annex 3 Appendix A attached to this report.
6. To adopt the Investment Strategy Report set out in Annex 3 Appendix B attached to this report.
7. To adopt the Capital Strategy Report (which incorporates the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement) set out in Annex 3 Appendix C attached to this report. Section 25, Local Government Act 2003

8. To note the Section 151 officer's view on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, set out in section 2 of this report. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS)
9. To note that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme will remain unchanged for 2024-25.

**BUDGET COUNCIL  
28 FEBRUARY 2024  
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT 2024-25**

**That Council:**

1. Approve the Council Tax Resolution, detailed in Appendix A to this motion.
2. Agree a General Fund revenue budget of £462.606m and a Council Tax Requirement for Tower Hamlets in 2024-25 of £138.168m.
3. Agree the Council's 2024-25 Budget Report and 2024-27 Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in Annex 2.
4. Agree the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Investment Strategy Report and Capital Strategy Report for 2024-25 set out in Annex 3.

## Appendix A

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS  
COUNCIL 28 FEBRUARY 2024  
COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION**

1. That the revenue estimates for 2024-25 be approved.
2. That it be noted that, at its meeting on 3 January 2024, Cabinet agreed 114,747 as its **Council Tax base** for the year 2024-25 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]
3. That the following amounts be now calculated by the council for the year 2024-25 in accordance with Section 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended and the Local Authorities (Alteration of Requisite Calculations) (England) Regulations 2011:
  - a) £1,477,223,042 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of The Act. [**Gross Expenditure**]
  - b) £1,339,055,032 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of The Act. [**Gross Income**]
  - c) £138,168,010 Being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of The Act, as its council tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of The Act). [**Council Tax Requirement**]
  - d) £1,204.11 Being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (2 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of The Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. [**Council Tax**]
4. Being the amount given by multiplying the amount at 3(d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of The Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of The Act, as the amount to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands. **Tower Hamlets Council Tax:**

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
£802.74	£936.53	£1,070.32	£1,204.11	£1,471.69	£1,739.27	£2,006.85	£2,408.22

5. That it be noted that for the year 2024-25 the **Greater London Authority (GLA)** has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
£314.27	£366.64	£419.02	£471.40	£576.16	£680.91	£785.67	£942.80

6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4 and 5 above, the council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of **Council Tax for the year 2024-25** for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
<b>£1,117.01</b>	<b>£1,303.17</b>	<b>£1,489.34</b>	<b>£1,675.51</b>	<b>£2,047.85</b>	<b>£2,420.18</b>	<b>£2,792.52</b>	<b>£3,351.02</b>

7. That the council hereby determines in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024-25



is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. As the billing authority, the council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024-25 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

<b>Results of Vote on Amendment moved by Councillor Marc Francis (Labour Group)</b>	
Mayor Lutfur Rahman	Against
Councillor Sirajul Islam	For
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	For
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Against
Councillor Leelu Ahmed	For
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	Against
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Against
Councillor Saied Ahmed	Against
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Against
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Against
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	For
Councillor Amina Ali	For
Councillor Asma Begum	For
Councillor Maisha Begum	For
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	For
Councillor Rachel Blake	For
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	For
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Against
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	Against
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	Against
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury	For
Councillor Marc Francis	For
Councillor Peter Golds	Abstain
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	Against
Councillor Kabir Hussain	Against
Councillor Kamrul Hussain	Against
Councillor Shubo Hussain	For
Councillor Asma Islam	For
Councillor Ahmodul Kabir	Against
Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled	Against
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Against
Councillor Sabina Khan	For
Councillor James King	For
Councillor Amy Lee	For
Councillor Abdul Malik	Against
Councillor Abdul Mannan	Against
Councillor Ana Miah	Against
Councillor Ayas Miah	Online – Couldn't Vote
Councillor Harun Miah	Against
Councillor Amin Rahman	Against
Councillor Rebeka Sultana	For
Councillor Maium Talukdar	Against
Councillor Bellal Uddin	Against
Councillor Abdal Ullah	Absent – Apologies given
Councillor Abdul Wahid	Against
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (The Speaker of the Council)	Against
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>FALLS</b>

<b>Results of Vote on Amendment moved by Councillor Nathalie Bienfait</b>	
Mayor Lutfur Rahman	Against
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Against
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Against
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Against
Councillor Leelu Ahmed	Against
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	Against
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Against
Councillor Saied Ahmed	Against
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Against
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Against
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Against
Councillor Amina Ali	Against
Councillor Asma Begum	Against
Councillor Maisha Begum	Against
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	For
Councillor Rachel Blake	Against
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Against
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Against
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	Against
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	Against
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury	Against
Councillor Marc Francis	Against
Councillor Peter Golds	Abstain
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	Against
Councillor Kabir Hussain	Against
Councillor Kamrul Hussain	Against
Councillor Shubo Hussain	Against
Councillor Asma Islam	Against
Councillor Ahmodul Kabir	Against
Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled	Against
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Against
Councillor Sabina Khan	Against
Councillor James King	Against
Councillor Amy Lee	Against
Councillor Abdul Malik	Against
Councillor Abdul Mannan	Against
Councillor Ana Miah	Against
Councillor Ayas Miah	Online – Couldn't Vote
Councillor Harun Miah	Against
Councillor Amin Rahman	Against
Councillor Rebeka Sultana	Against
Councillor Maium Talukdar	Against
Councillor Bellal Uddin	Against
Councillor Abdal Ullah	Absent – Apologies given
Councillor Abdul Wahid	Against
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (The Speaker of the Council)	Against
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>FALLS</b>

<b>Results of Vote on main Budget Motion moved by Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Councillor Saied Ahmed</b>	
Mayor Lutfur Rahman	For
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Against
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Against
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	For
Councillor Leelu Ahmed	Against
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	For
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	For
Councillor Saied Ahmed	For
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	For
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	For
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Against
Councillor Amina Ali	Against
Councillor Asma Begum	Against
Councillor Maisha Begum	Against
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	Abstain
Councillor Rachel Blake	Against
Councillor Mufedah Bustin	Against
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	For
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	For
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	For
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury	Against
Councillor Marc Francis	Against
Councillor Peter Golds	Against
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	For
Councillor Kabir Hussain	For
Councillor Kamrul Hussain	For
Councillor Shubo Hussain	Against
Councillor Asma Islam	Against
Councillor Ahmodul Kabir	For
Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled	For
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	For
Councillor Sabina Khan	Against
Councillor James King	Against
Councillor Amy Lee	Against
Councillor Abdul Malik	For
Councillor Abdul Mannan	For
Councillor Ana Miah	For
Councillor Ayas Miah	Online – Couldn't vote
Councillor Harun Miah	For
Councillor Amin Rahman	For
Councillor Rebeka Sultana	Against
Councillor Maium Talukdar	For
Councillor Bellal Uddin	For
Councillor Abdal Ullah	Absent – Apologies given
Councillor Abdul Wahid	For
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (The Speaker of the Council)	For
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>CARRIES</b>

**6. DESIGNATION OF MONITORING OFFICER**

Mr Steve Halsey, Chief Executive asked Council to note that he had appointed Linda Walker as an Interim Director for Legal Services following the departure of the previous Director.

This post would usually carry the designation of Monitoring Officer and Council was asked to endorse Linda Walker being designated as such. Following the debate Members **AGREED** to:

1. Endorse the appointment of Linda Walker as the designated Monitoring Officer for the Council.

The meeting ended at 10.08 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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## LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

### MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 3.02 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

#### Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Member)	Councillor Peter Golds (Member)
Councillor Faroque Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Iqbal Hossain (Member)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kabir Hussain (Member)
Councillor Leelu 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 Sabina Akhtar (Member)	Councillor Ahmodur Khan (Member)
Councillor Amina Ali (Member)	Councillor Sabina Khan (Member)
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait (Member)	Councillor Amin Rahman (Member)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin (Member)	Councillor Rebaka Sultana (Member)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Maium Talukdar (Member)
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Abdul Wahid (Member)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury (Member)	

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Musthak Ahmed
- Councillor Asma Begum
- Councillor Rachel Blake
- Councillor Bodrul Choudhury
- Councillor Marc Francis
- Councillor Kamrul Hussain
- Councillor James King
- Councillor Amy Lee
- Councillor Abdul Mannan
- Councillor Ana Miah
- Councillor Abdul Malik
- Councillor Bellal Uddin
- Councillor Abdal Ullah

It was noted that due to the time of day of the meeting, not all Members were able to attend. The following Councillors joined the meeting online and were therefore not formally in attendance and not able to vote.

- Councillor Ohid Ahmed
- Councillor Maisha Begum
- Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury
- Councillor Shubo Hussain

Apologies for lateness were received for:

- Councillor Leelu Ahmed
- Councillor Amina Ali

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

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests declared by members.

## 3. **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

### 3.1 **Pay Policy Statement 2024/25**

The Speaker of the Council agreed the reasons for the exempt appendix which were that it was restricted through Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contained information relating to an individual and the financial affairs of that individual.

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost-of-living introduced the report. Councillor Ahmed **moved** an amendment which was **seconded** by Councillor Kabir Ahmed. In respect to the Pay Policy Statement, Councillor Ahmed clarified that the consultation with the Mayor referred to disciplinary procedures at paragraph 3.2 of the main report rather than pay policies. He asked that the amendment be noted.

Members had no questions for Councillor Saied Ahmed.

**Council** unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note and agree the Pay Policy 2024-25 set out at Appendix 1 to the attached report to the Human Resources Committee, subject to the amendment proposed by Councillor Saied Ahmed.

### 3.2 **Statutory Officer Disciplinary Procedure**



Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the report. Councillor Maium Talukdar **moved** an amendment which was **seconded** by Councillor Saied Ahmed. Councillor Ahmed referred to the recommendations in the main report and stated that the wording ought to state 'informed' rather than 'consult' the Mayor in the Disciplinary Procedure.

Members had no questions for Councillor Maium Talukdar.

**Council** unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the new Statutory Officer Disciplinary Process document presented to the Human Resources Committee attached as Appendix 1 to this cover report subject to the amendment proposed by Councillor Saied Ahmed.
2. Agree the consequent changes to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules of the Constitution attached as Appendix 2 to the cover report.

### **3.3 Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference**

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care introduced the report. He stated changes had been made to the terms of reference for the Health and Wellbeing Board and asked Council to approve and agree the changes.

Members had no questions for Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury.

**Council** unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the new Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference and Constitutional changes.

## **4. OTHER REPORTS**

### **4.1 Agreeing Early Retirement / Voluntary Redundancy Exit Payments**

The Speaker of the Council accepted the reasons for urgency set out in the report and the reasons for the exempt appendix which were that it was restricted through Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contained information relating to an individual and the financial affairs of that individual.

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the report and stated the report sought approval for the payment of voluntary redundancy exit packages which exceed the £100,000 threshold as required under the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 40 of the Localism Act.

In reference to the restricted appendix of the report, it was explained that the Human Resources Committee would receive updates they could monitor to confirm if the savings were achieved.

There were no further questions from members.

**Council** unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note and approve the ER/VR related exit payments, including redundancy, additional severance pay and the strain cost of early payment of pension benefits. This agreement is recommended on the grounds that the costs can be recouped within the 3-year period of the MTFS through the deletion of the posts.
2. Note that the redundancy payment is part of the contractual terms and conditions of employment and the requirement for early payment of pension benefits relates to the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations.

#### **4.2 Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24 and 2024-25**

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the report. He said the report set out several matters for consideration before stating the reasons why an increase in members allowance was not favoured by the Administration. He urged members to support this position that there be no increase in allowances in 2023-24 or 2024-25.

Councillor Maium Talukdar seconded this proposal and Councillor Sirajul Islam, Leader of the Opposition stated his party were happy to support this too.

**Council** unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

1. Review and consider the report of the London Independent Remuneration Panel.
2. To agree that all allowances will remain frozen for the years 2023/24 and 2024/25.
3. Subject to Recommendation 2 agree to adopt the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25 as set out at Appendix 2 to the report.
4. To agree that the General Purposes Committee lead on any requested engagement with the London Independent Remuneration Panel, report back to Council as required.

#### **4.3 Committee Calendar 2024-25**

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Jahed Choudhury said the updated Committee Calendar tabled at the meeting set out the proposed dates of meetings for the Municipal Year 2024/25. He noted the adjustments made to

the calendar for Ramadan 2025 as well as the further amendment to move Human Resources Committee from 23<sup>rd</sup> September to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024. He asked members to approve the committee calendar.

Following a request, it was agreed to add the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education to the report in future years.

**Council** unanimously **RESOLVED** to:


1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 (as amended by the tabled papers), subject to the moving of the Human Resources Committee from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
2. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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# Agenda Item 5

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Council</b>  8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Petitions to Council</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	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 those petitions for debate (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 is one petition to be heard:
    - Petition to Defend Free Speech and Democracy
  - 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 to Defend Free Speech and Democracy**

### **Statement:**

We the undersigned are petitioning Tower Hamlets' mayor and council because we have real concerns about the government led Prevent programme as it directly affects the Muslim community in this borough. The experience of Muslims who live, work and study in Tower Hamlets, especially the experience of Muslim young people and their families, demonstrate clearly that Prevent is a racist, Islamophobic policy and a restriction on our right to free speech.

That situation has become more acute because the UK government is giving political and material support to the Israeli government in the conflict that is inflicting death and suffering on the Palestinian population of the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

The people of Tower Hamlets are showing great resilience at this difficult time. Many have demonstrated their support and sympathy for the Palestinian people, but we are still fearful of the consequences. Many of the borough's Muslim parents are worried that a child's innocent comment could lead to them being hauled before Prevent. In some situations, Muslim community members and parents have come together to resist the threat of Prevent, as happened recently in our neighbouring borough, Waltham Forest, but in most cases we feel too isolated to do that.

At the same time, we know that many of Tower Hamlets educators, social workers etc feel unhappy and compromised by Prevent, regardless of their religion or ethnic identity.

Therefore, we call on Tower Hamlets' Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Tower Hamlets' Council to:


- Call a meeting and a series of local meetings in Tower Hamlets for members of the community to speak about our experience with Prevent, and publish the findings of such meetings;

**Signatures received: 53**

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# Agenda Item 7

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>COUNCIL</b>  8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Motion for debate submitted by the Administration</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	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 A PROGRESSIVE  
COUNCIL: TWO YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION AND RECOVERY**

**Proposed by:** Cllr Saied Ahmed

**Seconded by:** Cllr Maium Talukdar

**[Text to follow]**

# Agenda Item 8

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>COUNCIL</b>  8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	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 – BEST VALUE INSPECTIONS**

**Proposed by:** Cllr Marc Francis

**Seconded by:** Cllr Sirajul Islam

**[Text to follow]**

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Council</b>  8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Questions submitted by Members of the Council</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	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**

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

### **11.1 Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain**

Can the Lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts which were left unsigned for 6 consecutive years under the previous administration.

### **11.2 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin**

Residents have heard rumours that the administration is planning to turn the Stebondale Street football pitches, in to floodlit pitches available for hire until 9pm at night. Please could the administration confirm what their plans are for the Stebondale pitches.

### **11.3 Question from Councillor Musthak Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member update us on progress with the recommendations following the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place in September last year?

### **11.4 Question from Councillor Asma Islam**

Could the Mayor inform me as to whether he has been in communication with Peabody HA? Peabody tenants across the borough have written to me expressing alarm about dramatic increases to service charges – With many tenants also raising poor quality maintenance and substandard conditions?

### **11.5 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member share how much it cost the taxpayer to unsuccessfully take one of our MPs - Apsana Begum to court? Can he explain how this represented Best Value?

### **11.6 Question from Councillor Amy Lee**

Can the lead member explain why there has been a delay to free community care? And when residents can expect Aspire to deliver on a key manifesto promise?

### **11.7 Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury**

Mr Speaker can the Lead Member tell us what steps have been taken to collect the money owed to the Council, from the Rich Mix Centre. The Rich Mix was loaned a substantial amount of taxpayers money under a previous Labour administration, and it is understood whilst this loan remains unpaid more money was given to the organisation under the last Mayor. It will help to provide precise figures and an explanation as to how this constituted Best Value?

### **11.8 Question from Councillor Asma Begum**

Could the lead member inform me as to how the insourcing of THH and Leisure services will affect the council's commitment to reach net-zero by 2030?

### **11.9 Question from Councillor Harun Miah**

Mr Speaker, I want to start by thanking the Police, council and community groups for keeping our borough safe and cohesive despite attempts by a minority to portray Tower Hamlets as a No-Go area - which is utter rubbish.

Can the Lead Member share feedback from the council's Tension Monitoring Group in relation to the Palestine Flags, can he tell us how many complaints have been received and what action was taken?

### **11.10 Question from Councillor Rebakah Sultana**

Could the lead member update us on the progress of the Council's Women's commission and inform us how it will work in relation to the operations of the council?

### **11.11 Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan**

Can the Lead Member provide an update with timelines on the insourcing of Tower Hamlets leisure services from GLL?

### **11.12 Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain**

Could the lead member inform me of what steps are being taken to communicate with residents regarding the changes to leisure services and reassure them that they will still receive the same services in the interim?

### **11.13 Question from Councillor Abdul Malik**

Can the lead member provide an update on the outcome of refreshed Local Plan consultation and if possible, outline any significant changes which will help bring investment and the delivery of affordable housing?

### **11.14 Question from James King**

What steps has the council taken to address the continuous vandalism of cars down Milligan Street and around Limehouse Causeway and Narrow Street?

### **11.15 Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir**

Last Ramadan there were numerous complaints of anti-social behaviour, illegal trading and people fighting in the streets at the back of East London Mosque during and after night prayers. We saw videos of young people wielding machetes and terrified women and children running into the mosque for safety. Can the Lead Member set out what

action will be taken to prevent the scenes we saw last year and stop prohibited activities in the vicinity?

#### **11.16 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Could the Lead Member consider whether a dog park could be installed at Wapping Rose Gardens? Residents have written to me suggesting that a designated space for dogs would benefit the whole community with our canine friends being able to exercise in a space for them and residents reassured that their green spaces are clean and safe for everyone.

#### **11.17 Question from Councillor Bellal Uddin**

Can the Lead Member provide an update on the regeneration of the Clichy Estate (known as HAP) which will see around 400 homes being built? It is understood the scheme has progressed significantly under the current Mayor and it will help to share where we are to date and work going forward.

#### **11.18 Question from Councillor Rachel Blake**

Can the lead member inform me what is the average waiting time for housing OT assessments in each of past two years please?

#### **11.19 Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled**

I understand the independent investigation, initiated by 31 members of staff, into housing management across housing options and homelessness has concluded, can the Lead Member share the findings and recommendations?

#### **11.20 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar**

Could the lead member inform me of progress of development of the Clichy Estate?

#### **11.21 Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam**

Could the lead member inform me of whether the council is communicating with relevant partners and reassuring THCH residents now that the proposed merger with Poplar Harca has reportedly ended?


#### **11.22 Question from Councillor Marc Francis**

Will the Mayor and Lead Member update Full Council on the action that has been taken in the past two years to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists at the mini roundabout at the junction of Tredegar Road and Fairfield Road?

#### **11.23 Question from Councillor Peter Golds**

Would the Mayor confirm as to whether there were discussions between the administration, either members or officers or both, and the Regulator with respect to the proposed merger between THCH and Poplar Harca?



Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>COUNCIL</b>  8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Motions submitted by Members of the Council</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	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 motion that has been submitted.

## 12.1 Motion on Tower Hamlets – A Go-To Borough

**Proposed by:** Cllr Abu Talha Chowdhury

**Seconded by:** Cllr Kabir Ahmed

### **This Council notes:**

- The overwhelmingly positive role that the cooperation and coexistence communities in our borough has played in the identity, spirit and development of Tower Hamlets.
- The integral and invaluable role that migrants, refugees, and asylum-seeking peoples have played in shaping the history and culture of Tower Hamlets.
- That those fleeing tyranny, oppression and war – whether they Jewish communities; Huguenots; the Irish, Caribbean, Bangladeshi, and Southeast Asian communities; or Somali communities and many others – have always been welcomed into this Borough, enriched our community, and thrived.
- That the contribution of these communities to the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of the Borough have changed its identity for the better.
- That in Tower Hamlets, we enjoy very strong community cohesion, with many different groups living side by side. Our Annual Residents Survey found that 87% of residents said that Tower Hamlets is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- That these communities have stood together and fought against racism and hatred in every generation: from the Irish, Jewish and working-class cockneys who stood bravely against the fascist Blackshirts in the 1930s; to the Caribbean community that fought against racism in the 50s and 60s; the Bangladeshi and South East Asian community – including the Mayor and many members from across the chamber – who faced down the National Front in the 70s and 80s; and the broad coalition of communities that expelled the EDL in the 2010s.
- That from Wapping to Whitechapel; Bow to Bethnal Green; and Canary Wharf to Limehouse, these communities have made all areas of Tower Hamlets a ‘go-to’ place to be. Through art; cuisine; community projects; history; and the mixing and sharing of cultures, this borough exemplifies the best of London, and is a shining example of how diversity and respect brings out the best of residents and their areas.

### **This Council believes:**

- That recent comments about our borough – underpinned by ignorance; Islamophobia; and division – could not be further from the truth.
- Tower Hamlets has and should always be a borough where the poor, the tired, the oppressed, and the hungry can come and know they will be welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.
- That our borough’s diversity and openness represents the best of humanity, and demonstrates that tolerance, respect, and understanding will always produce caring and cooperative places for people to live.

- That regardless of religion, skin colour, sexual orientation, gender, or belief system, Tower Hamlets will always be a safe place for all its residents.

**This Council resolves:**

- To produce an exhibition showcasing the rich history of diversity, integration and migration to Tower Hamlets, to be showcased in the new Town Hall.
- To invite any individual from Westminster especially those in any doubt to see the positive benefits of this migration and diversity of cultures to come for a tour of Tower Hamlets, to see first-hand the real values that underpin our borough.
- To build on the borough's work with organisations that support and protect the poorest, migrants and refugees.
- To work with communities and external stakeholders to develop and enhance its institutional knowledge in protecting and promoting refugees and asylum-seeking people, strengthen our social inclusion work to build links with marginalised communities, building on the good work of the existing Refugee and Families teams, and to ensure that these new communities can feel as accepted and integrated into the cultural and social fabric of our borough as the scores that preceded them.
- To work with boroughs and authorities across London and the country to protect migrants, refugees, and asylum-seeking people from hostile environments.
- That this administration and Council will continue to promote inclusivity; cooperation; and respect between and amongst all its communities and will always stand up against any division or attacks on our borough.
- To officially state its wish to be designated a 'Borough of Sanctuary' – cementing its commitment to inclusivity, tolerance, and dignity for all people.

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