

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2009

**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Helal Abbas	Councillor Ann Jackson
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Anwara Ali	Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor M. Shahid Ali	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Tim Archer	Councillor Abdul Matin
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Fozol Miah
Councillor Lutfu Begum	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Philip Briscoe	Councillor Abdul Munim
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Rupert Eckhardt	Councillor Lutfur Rahman
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Muhammad Abdullah Salique
Councillor Fazlul Haque	Councillor A A Sardar
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Clair Hawkins	Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Alexander Heslop	Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Ahmed Hussain	Councillor Dulal Uddin
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Waiseul Islam	Councillor Salim Ullah

The Mayor, Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer, in the chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Rofique Ahmed, Shirley Houghton, Abjol Miah, Tim O'Flaherty, Mamun Rashid and Motin Uz-Zaman.

RESOLVED

That the apologies for absence be noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members in respect of any items on the agenda for the meeting.

3. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There were no announcements.

4. NEW EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS - RESULTS OF CONSULTATION, MAYORAL PETITION AND REFERENDUM PROPOSALS

Councillor Lutfur Rahman **MOVED** and Councillor Joshua Peck **SECONDED** 'that the recommendations in the report of the Chief Executive be adopted; that at recommendation 2.2 the referendum shall take place on 6 May 2010; and that in accordance with recommendation 2.5, the Council adopt new Executive Arrangements based on a Leader and Cabinet (England) model with effect from that date.'

Councillor Lutfur Rahman, Leader of the Council, stated that the meeting had two important matters to resolve. The authority was obliged by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to change its executive arrangements and replace the current system, under which the Council elected the Leader and Cabinet Members annually, with one of two new models, both of which provided for a longer term leadership appointment. Separately, following receipt of a valid petition under the Local Government Act 2000, a referendum would be held on whether or not to introduce a Directly Elected Mayor for the borough, and the Council must decide the timing of that referendum.

Councillor Rahman stated that the Majority Group strongly believed that the will of local people must be respected on this matter and that the referendum should be held on 6 May 2010 alongside the Council elections scheduled for that date. In the event of a majority 'Yes' vote in the referendum, there would be an election in October 2010 to appoint an elected Executive Mayor for the borough. If on the other hand there was a majority 'No' vote in the referendum, the Council would continue with the four-year Leader and Cabinet model.

Councillor Peter Golds, Leader of the Opposition, supported the proposal for a referendum on 6 May 2010 as he believed this would allow time for a considered debate on the issues before the referendum and then, in the event of a 'Yes' vote, for a proper and informed campaign by the political parties and any independent candidates. Holding the referendum on the day of the Council elections would also avoid the additional expense and disruption to schools and policing that would result from a 'stand alone' referendum in February.

Councillor Stephanie Eaton, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, thanked Councillor Abjol Miah and the petition organisers for providing the people of the borough with the opportunity to take part in the decision on this important matter. She felt it was important that as many people as possible were able to participate in the referendum and that holding the poll on the same day as the Council elections would be convenient for voters and encourage a higher

turnout, as well as being financially prudent. Councillor Eaton also referred to the extreme adverse weather conditions experienced in February 2009 and felt that May would be a more suitable time of year to hold the poll. For these reasons Councillor Eaton supported Councillor Rahman's proposal.

Councillor Dulal Uddin, Deputy Leader of the Respect Group, thanked the electors who had signed the petition. He opposed the proposal for the referendum to be held in May 2010, feeling that local people should be given the opportunity to choose on this matter as soon as possible. A referendum in February as recommended by the Monitoring Officer would, in the event of a 'Yes' vote, enable the Mayoral Election itself to be held on 6 May 2010. This would give local people the chance to elect their representatives to a number of positions – Council, Mayor and possibly also parliamentary - on the same day. If the referendum were to be held in May there could be a period of uncertainty until the election of a Mayor in October which Cllr Uddin felt would not promote effective decision making.

Councillor Joshua Peck, Deputy Leader of the Council and Seconder of the motion, welcomed the commitment of the residents who had attended the meeting; and the opportunity that the referendum would provide for all local people to have their opinions heard. Moving to a Directly Elected Mayor would be a very significant change and the Council had a responsibility to more than 200,000 residents of the borough to ensure a proper and informed debate. Holding the referendum in May would allow time for this as well as avoiding unnecessary additional costs. Councillor Peck also noted that on each polling day up to 38 schools in the borough were closed, affecting approximately 11,000 pupils. Holding the referendum in February would mean two such closures in the same school year.

After further debate, the proposal moved by Councillor Lutfur Rahman was put to the vote. At this point 10 members rose to request a recorded vote in accordance with Procedure Rule 17.4 and Councillors' votes were recorded as follows:-

For the motion – Councillors Lutfur Rahman, Peter Golds, Stephanie Eaton, Helal Abbas, Ohid Ahmed, Rajib Ahmed, Dr Anwara Ali, Mohammed Shahid Ali, Shahed Ali, Timothy Archer, Abdul Asad, Lutfa Begum, Philip Briscoe, Alibor Choudhury, Rupert Eckhardt, Marc Francis, Fazlul Haque, Shafiqul Haque, Clair Hawkins, Alexander Heslop, Ahmed Hussain, Sirajul Islam, Waiseul Islam, Ann Jackson, Denise Jones, Dr Emma Jones, Azizur Rahman Khan, Rania Khan, Shiria Khatun, Abdul Matin, Joshua Peck, Oliur Rahman, Muhammad Abdullah Salique, Abdul Aziz Sardar, Rachael Saunders, David Snowdon, Bill Turner, Abdal Ullah, Salim Ullah and Ahmed Adam Omer (The Mayor) (Total 40 Councillors)

Against the motion – Councillors Fozol Miah, Harun Miah, Mohammed Abdul Munim and Dulal Uddin (Total 4 Councillors)

Abstentions – No Councillors

Accordingly the motion was **agreed** and it was:-

RESOLVED

1. That the Council notes the receipt of a valid petition under the provisions of section 34 of the Local Government Act 2000 and that a referendum on the introduction of a Directly Elected Mayor for Tower Hamlets must be held;
2. That the referendum on the introduction of a Directly Elected Mayor for Tower Hamlets shall take place on 6 May 2010;
3. That the results of the public consultation on the form of new executive arrangements undertaken before receipt of the petition be noted;
4. That for the reasons set out in section 10 of the Chief Executive's report, the proposed new executive arrangements will be likely to assist in securing continuous improvement in the way in which the local authority's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
5. That the Council adopt new executive arrangements based on a new-style 'Leader and Cabinet (England)' model as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive, to operate in Tower Hamlets with effect from 6 May 2010;
6. That officers be authorised to draft detailed constitutional amendments as necessary to give effect to the above, for adoption at the Council meeting in March 2010.
7. That further consultation take place on the detailed proposals for a mayoral executive to be the subject of the referendum and a further Extraordinary Council Meeting be held in due course to agree those proposals.

The meeting ended at 7.56 p.m.

Chair,
Council