

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2013**

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

**Members Present:**

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Helal Abbas	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Anwar Khan
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Rofique U Ahmed	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Md. Maium Miah
Councillor Tim Archer	Councillor M. A. Mukit MBE
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer
Councillor Mizan Chaudhury	Councillor Lesley Pavitt
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Zara Davis	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor Judith Gardiner	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Carlo Gibbs	Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Gloria Thienel
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Ann Jackson	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Denise Jones	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman

The meeting commenced at 7.37 p.m.

**Councillor Lesley Pavitt, Speaker of the Council, in the Chair**

**NOTE - AGENDA ORDER**

During the meeting the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Minutes are presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda. Urgent motions, moved with the agreement of the Council without notice, are listed at item 13.

The order of business as taken at the meeting was as follows:

Items:

- 1 – Apologies for Absence

- 2 – Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
- 3 – Minutes
- 4 – To receive announcements (if any) from the speaker of the Council or the Head of Paid Service
- 5 – Petitions (5.1 to 5.2)
- 12 – Motions (12.9)
- 5 – Petitions (5.3)
- 6 – Public Questions (6.1 to 6.9)
- 7 – Mayor’s Report
- Emergency Motion on Cycle Safety
- 8 – Member Questions (8.1)
- Emergency Motion on Canvassing allegations and use of Council resources
- 8 – Member Questions (8.2 to 8.6)
- 9.1 – Report from Cabinet (Community Safety Plan)
- 12 – Motions (12.3)
- 9.2 – Report from Cabinet (Council Tax Replacement Scheme Year Two)\*
- 11.2 – Appointments to Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Delegation of Power.\*
- 11.3 – Mid-Year Review Report on 2013/14 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy\*
- 11.4 – Monitoring Officer\*

\* As the guillotine was reached these items were voted on without debate.

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Craig Aston, Lutfa Begum, Carli Harper-Penman, Fozol Miah and Amy Whitelock Gibbs.

### **RESOLVED**

That the apologies for absence be noted.

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

No declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were made.

## **3. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 18 September 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

#### **4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Speaker of the Council made two announcements:

- She thanked and congratulated Councillor Craig Aston for his efforts in leading this year's Poppy Appeal which had already raised over £13,500.
- Following some poor behaviour at recent meetings the Speaker welcomed the new arrangements for managing the public gallery and asked Members to inform her immediately if any further issues arose during the meeting.

#### **5. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS**

##### **5.1 Petition to investigate the Roman Road regeneration cash**

Mr Nigel McCollum addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members.

Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources, advised the meeting that he was unable to comment on this matter in accordance with advice received from the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor, then responded to the issues raised. He highlighted that the Administration were committed to ensuring accountability to the public and they would investigate to ensure that the funds had been spent wisely. Following the investigations a response would be prepared for residents.

##### **RESOLVED**

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director Development and Renewal, for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

##### **5.2 Petition titled 'Just Money' regarding payday lending**

Two representatives addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members.

Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources, then responded to the issues raised. He thanked the petitioners for their campaign and expressed support for the desire to restrict the number of shops offering payday lending. He highlighted work the Council had already undertaken such as work with partnership agencies, a ban on their advertising in council media and making the public aware of the dangers in using them. He stated that the Council hoped to further develop the campaign alongside all interested partners.

**RESOLVED**

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director Resources, for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

**Procedural Motion**

At this point Carlo Gibbs **moved** and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded** a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to debate Motion 12.9 ('Motion on reducing the cost of credit') as the next item of business.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to debate Motion 12.9 (see minute 12 below).

**5.3 Petition to Stop Homophobia**

The Speaker of the Council warmly welcomed to the meeting students and staff from George Green's School and expressed great pleasure that the students had shown such a keen interest in the local democratic process.

Four students from George Green's School addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members, who also echoed the Speaker's remarks.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor, thanked the students for their petition and presentation. He agreed that hate crime had no place in the Borough and he highlighted some of the work being undertaken such as the creation of dedicated safe places to report homophobic attacks. However, he emphasised that the Council was not complacent and would look to do more.

**RESOLVED**

That the petition be referred to the Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

**6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The following questions and (except where indicated) a supplementary question arising from each were put at the meeting and were responded to by the relevant Executive Members.

**6.1 Question from Mr Mahbub Alam**

In this time of austerity and cuts, what are you doing to engage local people in democracy?

**Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

The Mayor is committed to building local community structures to engage local people in local democracy and participation. This is being done through the introduction of the 17 Local Community Ward Forums (LCWFs). The LCWFs enable residents to raise, discuss and address local service priorities by promoting dialogue with service providers and commissioning locally relevant solutions through participatory budgeting. 87 Community Champion Coordinators have been recruited to support this new structure and deliver the new community offer. The council has provided each of the LCWF's a budget of £10,000 which will be used through participatory budgeting for local people to make local decisions on their local priorities.

*(No supplementary question was put)*

**6.2 Question from Mr Chris Chapman**

Will the Mayor state which organisations have been permitted to hire Millwall Park during 2013 and 2014, what is the financial reward to the council from such hirings and how much of this is reinvested on the Isle of Dogs?

**Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing**

Over the last five years the Council has invested £250,000 in Millwall Park. In 2013 there was one commercial event in Millwall Park. This was the Oktoberfest, 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> October. There are no confirmed events in 2014 but the Oktoberfest have expressed an interest in returning. The details of the fees paid are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential. Any funds generated in parks go toward supporting council services. A minimum 10% of all fees generated in Millwall Park go direct to the parks services.

**Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Chris Chapman**

Are public spaces best used for residents given that they are there fundamentally for the benefit of residents?

**Summary of Councillor Rania Khan's response to the Supplementary Question**

The park is well used by residents but it is the government's ideologically driven budget cuts that require the Council to have more events in parks to raise funds.

**Procedural Motion**

Following question 6.2, Councillor Tim Archer **moved**, and Councillor David Snowdon **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to debate Motion 12.8 ('Motion regarding Green Spaces') as the next item of business.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

### **6.3 Question from Mr Terry McGreenera**

Why does Tower Hamlets Council put restrictions on members of the public on exercising their democratic rights at meetings of the council?

#### **Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

The Council does allow the public to contribute to its meetings. Full Council meetings are the responsibility of the Speaker. The Mayor and Lead Members do not have any powers in this chamber. However, the exact rules are governed by the Speaker and Council itself and not the Executive.

#### **Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Terry McGreenera**

The current rules restricting a resident's right to ask a number of questions at Council meetings are not democratic. Will you remove them?

#### **Summary of Councillor Ohid Ahmed's response to the Supplementary Question**

Full Council meetings are the responsibility of the Speaker. The Mayor and Lead Members do not have any powers in this chamber. It is for the Speaker and Council, rather than the Executive, to determine its rules of debate.

### **6.4 Question from Mr Paul Dietman**

Why has the council stopped accepting cash for parking permits?

#### **Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment**

Residents are still able to pay cash for parking permits – at all Post Offices and Pay Point shops.

We no longer have a specific Council cash office as there was extremely limited use of the service and using local shops and post offices is far easier for most residents.

*(No supplementary question was put)*

### **6.5 Question from Mr Daryl Stafford**

Will the Mayor explain why he regards the White Swan as a sex establishment and if not what he will be doing to exclude the White Swan from his proposed policy on sex establishments?

**Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing**

Anyone who has told you that the Mayor is responsible for this is deliberately misleading you.

Licensing law is made in Parliament, it is only the Council's job to enforce it - which we try to do in a sensitive way.

And anyone who says the White Swan is threatened with closure because of this is also deliberately misleading you.

The White Swan is not affected by this legislation as it holds "Grandfather Rights" that allow existing venues to operate as before.

**Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Daryl Stafford**

Does that mean the White Swan is in effect excluded and not categorised as a sex establishment.

**Summary of Councillor Rabina Khan's response to the Supplementary Question**

As I stated, the White Swan is not affected by this legislation as it has "Grandfather Rights" that will allow it to continue operating as before.

**6.6 Question from Mr Desmond Ellerbeck**

Will the Mayor outline his proposals for curbing the antisocial behaviour prevalent in the public gallery during council meetings? So far I have witnessed personal insults, racial, misogynistic and homophobic chanting and heckling, often in more than one language, and always in full view of LBTH staff. Please explain how a 71 year old disabled Alzheimer's sufferer who takes out a camera is pounced upon by numerous security staff and the meeting is adjourned, yet no action is taken to curb the monthly occurrences of verbal abuse and intended intimidating actions listed above?

**Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

The Speaker chairs Full Council meetings and it is up to the speaker to control behaviour in the public gallery.

**Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Desmond Ellerbeck**

Whilst I'm pleased to see the new measures in place why has it taken so long to address, especially considering many of the worst offenders appear to support the Mayor and his Cabinet?

**Summary of Councillor Ohid Ahmed's response to the supplementary question**

The Executive do not have the power to control the Council meeting. It is for the Speaker to control behaviour at Council meetings.

[Following this question Councillor Lesley Pavitt, Speaker of the Council, raised a point of personal explanation to state that she had requested the new control measures that had been put in place at the meeting and had asked Members to alert her to any problems that occurred.]

**6.7 Question from Mr Neil King**

Will the Mayor publicly state his revised policy on use of Taxis by members of his administration?

**Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources**

The policy on the use of taxis that had been implemented by the previous Labour Administration has changed. The Mayor has stated that no Cabinet Members can use taxis except in exceptional circumstances and since the new policy has been put in place no taxis have been used.

**Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Neil King**

When they are so worried about austerity cuts how many Executive Members will be paying the Council back for previous taxi usage?

**Summary of Councillor Alibor Choudhury's response to the Supplementary Question**

Taxis are only taken in exceptional circumstance and since the new policy has been put in place no taxis have been used by Cabinet members.

**6.8 Question from Mr Carlton Boulter**

In August we were proud to host the East End Coronation Anniversary Gala in Bow. This community-led event which unified and showcased all diverse sections of our borough coincided with the handing back to the community of our centre - the Francis Lee Community Centre. The Centre was re-opened on the day by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester. However, with regret, Old Ford Housing Association are now refusing to allow residents to fully manage our centres, merely offering us management in the evenings. This is not acceptable to our local community. What can you do to help us put localism into action and empower our vibrant community?

**Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing**

Congratulations on the event that you held. I met some of the residents there who brought this issue to my attention. I have arranged a meeting with the CEO of the Old Ford Housing Association and I will keep you informed of the results of that meeting.

**Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Carlton Boulter**

This is a small part of a bigger problem in that Old Ford Housing Association has become such a large scale organisation that it has lost touch with what residents want on the ground. We need it to be locally managed by local people.

(There was no further response from Councillor Rabina Khan)

**6.9 Question from Ms Carlie Barnes**

An invitation has been received from the Governor of Jenin to enter into formal twinning with Tower Hamlets. What is the Mayor's position on this?

**Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

The Mayor and Executive fully sympathise with the Palestinian people. There is a motion on the agenda later on this subject that we hope the Council will support.

[Note - There was no time left to allow a supplementary question]

**Procedural Motion**

Following question 6.9, Councillor Shahed Ali **moved**, and Councillor Kabir Ahmed **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to debate Motion 12.14 ('Motion regarding Twinning Tower Hamlets and the Governorate of Jenin') as the next item of business.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

[Note: The following Councillors each asked that it be recorded that they had voted in favour of the above procedural motion moved by Councillor Shahed Ali: Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Councillor Rofique U Ahmed, Councillor Shahed Ali, Councillor Abdul Asad, Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Councillor Shafiqul Haque, Councillor Aminur Khan, Councillor Rabina Khan, Councillor Rania Khan, Councillor Harun Miah, Councillor Maium Miah, Councillor Oliur Rahman and Councillor Gulam Robbani.]

Questions 6.10 and 6.11 were not put due to a lack of time. The Service Head, Democratic Services indicated that written responses would be

provided to the questions. [Note: The written responses are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.]

## 7. **MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor made his report to the Council meeting, extending a welcome to all present. During his report he expressed condolences to the families of the cyclists who had been killed in recent accidents on roads in the Borough. He concluded by wishing season's greetings to those celebrating Christmas and Hanukkah.

When the Mayor had completed his report, the Leader of the Majority Group and the Leaders of the Minority Groups then each responded briefly.

### **Procedural Motion**

At this point Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.15, Rule 13.1 be suspended to enable an urgent motion on Cycling Safety to be debated without notice as the next item of business." The text of the proposed urgent motion was circulated to the meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to debate the urgent motion (see minute 13 below).

## 8. **TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

The following questions and (except where indicated) a supplementary question arising from each were put at the meeting and were responded to by the relevant Executive Members.

### **8.1 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders**

Is the Mayor prepared to be honest about how his re-election campaign is being funded?

### **Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources**

The Mayor fully complies with the law. If you have specific allegations then you should list them.

### **Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders**

Does the Mayor pay for his canvassers and if so how? Is he aware of people claiming to be from Tower Hamlets Homes who have been distributing his leaflets? Has he investigated and does he think this may be fraudulent? Why

has he only made one donations submission to the Electoral Commission and how does he fund his campaign?

### **Summary of Councillor Alibor Choudhury's response to the Supplementary Question**

These are unfounded allegations and no wrong doing has been found.

### **Procedural Motion**

Following Question 8.1 Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Helal Abbas **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.15, Rule 13.1 be suspended to enable an urgent motion on Canvassing allegations and the use of Council resources to be debated without notice as the next item of business." The text of the proposed urgent motion was circulated to the meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to debate the urgent motion (see minute 13 below).

### **8.2 Question from Councillor Tim Archer**

Will the Mayor please outline how his "Community Champions" were selected, and what steps were taken to ensure they were representative of the entire Tower Hamlets community?

### **Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

87 community champions were recruited reflecting all the local communities in the borough. Two rounds of recruitment took place and a variety of channels were used to encourage applications from across our communities including road shows, community networks, outreach through specialist interest groups and the council's equality groups.

Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets (VCTH) assessed all applicants and made recommendations to the Tower Hamlets Partnership Executive. The Tower Hamlets Partnership Executive accepted all of VCTH's recommendations.

### **Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Tim Archer**

Were any councillors involved in this process? Transparency is surely important but two have not allowed themselves to be named can this be right?

### **Summary of Councillor Ohid Ahmed's response to the Supplementary Question**

No councillors were involved in the process. It is up to the Community Champions whether they wish to be named or not.

### **8.3 Question from Councillor Carlo Gibbs**

Why has the Mayor suspended the community chest and transferred the funds to the community events fund?

#### **Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources**

As part of the Officers report to the Corporate Grants Programme Board (CGPB) of 11 June 2013, it was noted that there was a significant oversubscription (of requested funds) for the Community Events Fund. The Board's recommendation was: to clear the oversubscription by transferring funds from the Community Chest Budget into the Community Events Budget.

The rationale for the recommendation was based on the fact that there appeared to be an inequitable distribution of the available budget between these funds over the 2 year period 2012/14: Community Chest £588,000 Fund as opposed to only £100,000 for the Community Events Fund.

With the Community Chest suspended and the transfer of monies to the Community Events Fund, the revised budget over the 2 years changes to:

- Community Chest £426,305
- Community Events £261,695

In due course the CGPB will receive a report from officers setting out proposals for the 2014/15 programme.

#### **Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Carlo Gibbs**

The decisions were made behind closed doors will he permit the publication of the minutes from community events and community chest panels.

#### **Summary of Councillors Alibor Choudhury's response to the Supplementary Question**

I understand that officers have already supplied you with all the papers you have requested.

### **8.5 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun**

Why has enough not been done to reduce Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) on the Brownfield Estate in my ward?

#### **Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

I am also a Councillor for east India and Lansbury Ward and I often meet residents from the Brownfield Estate. In fact I met many residents there on the street this morning and we're doing a lot to help them.

I want to say that we take ASB very seriously. That's why I'm proud of the fact that despite the incorrect figures being bandied about by the Labour Party; crime in Tower Hamlets has fallen MORE than in Hackney and Newham.

So despite Cllr Sirajul's assertions in the local paper, we won't be following their example when it comes to policing:

Over the last 3 months the Council's Community Safety team have deployed our THEO's to provide extra reassurance and their local patrols have been co-ordinated with the police.

The Partnership Task Force, The Gangs Unit as well as Neighbourhood Policing teams have also been deployed to tackle crime and ASB on the estate. This coordinated action has resulted in over 60 stops of individuals for ASB and in Poplar HARCA issuing tenancy warnings to residents and injunctions prohibiting people entering the area.

However, we also recognise the very important role local people can play in helping to reduce ASB and that is why we are setting up Local Community Ward Forums to help us support local action more effectively.

#### **Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun**

Why are the residents of Brownfield Estate suffering from increasing ASB whilst the Deputy Mayor is gallivanting at lavish dinners and not attending local walkabouts?

#### **Summary of Councillor Ohid Ahmed's response to the Supplementary Question**

I did not attend the walkabout you mentioned as I was ill but last year I attended 14 walkabouts whereas you did not even attend your own ward walkabout and neither did many leading Labour councillors. Similarly this year both you and Cllr Rajib Ahmed failed to take part while many residents of the ward came out in the cold and rain.

#### **8.6 Question from Councillor David Snowdon**

A number of new parking spaces have recently been marked out on Westferry Road opposite the Clifton Restaurant and Supermarket. Cllr Davis and I have had a large number of complaints that cars parking in these spaces have led to reduced visibility for cars turning off and onto Westferry Road. Will the Mayor explain as to whose instigation were these parking spaces marked out?

#### **Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment**

I would welcome Members raising these sorts of issues when they arise rather than waiting for the next Full Council meeting.

As part of the planned Highways resurfacing project in Westferry Road, the opportunity was taken to review the parking facilities and maximise the opportunities presented. There is also a local fire station there who would be in a good place to advise us of concerns but they have not raised any issues.

#### **Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor David Snowdon**

Will you respond to the concerns raised directly to officers by local residents and an elected member?

#### **Summary of Councillor Shahed Ali's response to the Supplementary Question**

Notices were clearly put up inviting residents to submit concerns but I am not aware that anyone has done so.

#### **Procedural Motion**

Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor John Pierce **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 9 the meeting be extended for up to 30 minutes to enable the remaining business items 9 and 11, and Motions 12.13 and 12.11 to be considered."

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

#### **Procedural Motion**

Following Question 8.6 Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.9 the Council proceed to next business."

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

Question 8.4 was not put as the questioner was not present. Questions 8.7 to 8.26 were not put due to lack of time. The Service Head, Democratic Services indicated that written responses would be provided to the questions. [Note: The written responses are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.]

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

### **9.1 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16: Report from Cabinet Meeting, 11th September 2013**

The Council considered the proposals of the Executive for the Community Safety Plan 2013-16.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **moved**, and Councillor Alibor Choudhury **seconded**, the recommendation as set out in the report.

### **Procedural motion**

During the debate Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to debate Motion 12.3 (‘Motion on tackling crime in Tower Hamlets’) immediately.”

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to debate Motion 12.3 (see minute 12 below).

Councillor Carlo Gibbs then **moved**, and Councillor Abdal Ullah **seconded**, an amendment as follows:-

“To refer the Community Safety Plan back to the Mayor and Cabinet for reconsideration and to take into account the serious comments and concerns raised by the Council in its decision at Motion 12.3 ‘Tackling Crime in Tower Hamlets’. Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

### **RESOLVED**

To refer the Community Safety Plan back to the Mayor and Cabinet for reconsideration and to take into account the serious comments and concerns raised by the Council in its decision at Motion 12.3 ‘Tackling Crime in Tower Hamlets’.

## **9.2 Council Tax Replacement Scheme Year Two: Report from Cabinet Meeting, 6th November 2013**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director Resources, including the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 regarding the Council Tax Replacement Scheme Year Two.

Under the guillotine procedure the recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Council agree the proposed Council Tax Replacement Scheme for 2014/15.

## **10. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)**

There was no business under this heading.

## 11. OTHER BUSINESS

### 11.1 Consideration of the Adoption of the Sexual Entertainment Licensing Regime, Policing and Crime Act 2009

The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the Council that this agenda item had been **withdrawn**.

### 11.2 Appointments to Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Delegation of Power

The Council considered the report of the Head of Paid Service on the delegation of powers to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to appoint to joint health scrutiny committees on behalf of the Council.

Under the Guillotine Procedure the recommendations in the report were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

#### RESOLVED

1. To delegate to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the power to establish and make appointments to a joint overview and scrutiny committee.
2. To authorise any necessary and consequential amendment to the Council's Constitution to put into effect the above delegation.

### 11.3 Mid-Year Review Report on 2013/14 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director Resources reviewing progress on the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

NB: A corrected version of page 284 of the report was circulated to the meeting and is attached at Appendix B to these minutes.

Under the guillotine procedure the recommendation set out in the report was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

#### RESOLVED

To note the content of the report.

#### 11.4 Monitoring Officer

The Council considered proposed arrangements in connection with the role of Monitoring Officer.

Under the guillotine procedure the recommendations in the agenda were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

#### RESOLVED

1. That subject to the outcome of consultation and implementation of the restructure of the Chief Executive's directorate, the proposed new post of Director of Law, Probity and Governance, once established, be designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer
2. That the interim arrangements for the position of Monitoring Officer be extended until an appointment is made to the above post.

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

##### 12.3 Motion regarding Tackling Crime in Tower Hamlets

Councillor Abdal Ullah **moved**, and Councillor Shiria Khatun **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda subject to a number of alterations as tabled.

Following debate, the motion as amended was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

#### RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- That by the Metropolitan Police's own figures crime in Tower Hamlets has increased 1.4% since 2010.
- Over the same period crime in neighbouring in Newham is down 8% and in Barking and Dagenham it is down 10%.
- In 2011/12 there were almost 20,000 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Tower Hamlets has the second highest levels of anti-social behaviour in London (p. 149)
- Figures in the Community Safety Plan, buried on page 130, show that between October 2009 and September 2012 robberies were up 50%, knife crime was up 49%

- In the 2013 Annual Residents Survey 41% of people said crime was one of their top three concerns, this was the biggest overall concern from residents.
- The Mayor's Community Safety Plan makes no reference to the significant increases in crime and ASB nor does it give a true appreciation of the key challenges facing the borough.
- The Mayor vetoed Labour's proposal at the 2011 Budget to fund 17 new police officers.
- That crime figures previously published on the Metropolitan Police Website were deemed inaccurate last week over a month after Labour first raised concerns about the increasing crime levels.

This Council Believes:

- That the Mayor's complacent approach to crime has meant the Council has not been focused on tackling what residents see as the most important issue facing our borough.
- The borough needs a Mayor who will show leadership in facing up to and challenging anti-social behaviour, tasking council officers appropriately and working in partnership with other organisations including the police.
- That the inaccurate crime statistics previously published on the Metropolitan police's website, and the fact that it took the Council over a month to realise the figures were inaccurate, show the level of disorganisation between the police and the Council.

This Council further notes:

- Neighbourhood policing has been essentially destroyed – many wards now have just one PC and one PCSO.
- The positive impact of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams which were introduced by the Labour Government and Labour Council in Tower Hamlets. That the SNTs helped to not only reduce crime in Tower Hamlets but also increased public confidence in the police.
- The changes introduced by Boris Johnson which have cut Safer Neighbourhood Teams to the bone by cutting the teams to one police officer and one police community support officer per ward, down from six officers under Labour.
- The CSP figures show that incidences of arson in the borough are down 31% since 2009/10.
- Boris Johnson continues to pursue his plan to close half of the borough's police stations as well as closing Bow fire station and halving

the number of fire engines at Whitechapel.

This Council further believes:

- The neighbourhood policing model introduced by the last Labour Government and piloted by the Labour council was a strong and successful model for local policing.
- Under the current Mayor of London neighbourhood policing has been significantly dismantled.
- The current Mayor of Tower Hamlets has completely failed to protect the community policing model which was so successful after Labour introduced it.
- Boris Johnson's cuts to police and fire stations in the borough will have a detrimental effect on community safety.
- The closure of Bow and cuts at Whitechapel fire station will not only reduce capacity but also put additional pressure on the remaining stations and staff. This will in turn reduce their ability to undertake fire prevention outreach work and could threaten to reverse the positive gains made over previous years.

This Council resolves:

- To condemn the Mayor of Tower Hamlets for his failure of leadership in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To reassert the importance of strong and locally integrated neighbourhood policing team and to support Labour's approach to reassert a neighbourhood policing model.
- To reiterate Labour's call for the Mayor to support and fund new police officers as opposed to additional THEOs.
- To refer the Community Safety Plan back to the Mayor and Cabinet for reconsideration and to take into account the serious comments and concerns raised by Council.

### **12.9 Motion regarding dealing with the cost of credit**

Councillor Anwar Khan **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Alibor Choudhury **moved**, and Councillor Oliur Rahman **seconded** a tabled amendment as follows:-

"Under Notes:

Add the following-

That the coalition Government has finally bowed to pressure from campaigners to change the law and impose a duty on the Financial Conduct Authority to cap the cost of pay day loans.

That the Council prohibits advertisements from pay-day loan companies in all council publications.

That the Council actively promotes the London Community Credit Union, which has 3 offices in Tower Hamlets. This includes funding the quarterly advertisement in East End Life, organising presentations to housing providers and other key stakeholders, operating a payroll deduction scheme and promoting information on credit union savings schemes in local children's centres and schools.

That the Financial Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan endorsed by Tower Hamlets Partnership and Cabinet in July 2013, sets out how the Council will work with schools, community organisations, housing providers, faith organisations and providers of debt and money management advice to ensure that every resident of Tower Hamlets has access to financial advice and support.

Under resolves:

Add:-

To support the actions that this administration is taking to clamp down on legal loan sharks.

Delete: 'That payday loan firms should be banned from advertising in Council publications or on Council-owned advertising boards, from all public computers' (as this is already taking place).

Delete: 'To promote credit unions in Tower Hamlets as community based organisations offering access to affordable credit and promoting saving' (as this is already taking place)

Delete: To work with school, community organisations, housing providers, faith organisations and providers of debt and money management advice to ensure that every resident of Tower Hamlets has access to financial advice and support (as this is already taking place)

Add:

'To congratulate those involved in the campaign, and in particular the Walthamstow MP, Stella Creasy, on their achievement of this dramatic u-turn from the coalition Government in capping pay-day loans.'

Following debate the amendment moved by Councillor Alibor Choudhury was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

[Note: The following Councillors requested that it be recorded that they had voted in favour of the amendment moved by Councillor Alibor Choudhury:- Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Councillor Rofique U Ahmed, Councillor Shahed Ali, Councillor Abdul Asad, Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Councillor Shafiqul Haque, Councillor Aminur Khan, Councillor Rabina Khan, Councillor Rania Khan, Councillor Harun Miah, Councillor Maium Miah, Councillor Oliur Rahman and Councillor Gulam Robbani.]

Councillors Anwar Khan and Rachael Saunders made minor amendments to their motion to address points that had been raised during the debate. Following further debate the substantive motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

### **RESOLVED**

This Council notes:

- The UK-wide campaign to end 'legal loan sharking'.
- The outrageous interest rates charged by some pay day lenders
- The way in which these loans trap people in spirals of unmanageable debt.
- That as Christmas approaches these companies will seek to use public advertising to target people in our borough who are struggling to make ends meet.
- That unaffordable credit is extracting wealth from the most deprived communities.
- The 'Just Money' campaign by UK Citizens that brought this matter to the attention of the Council.

This Council believes:

- That the lack of access to affordable credit is socially and economically damaging.
- Unaffordable credit is causing a myriad of unwanted effects such as poorer diets, colder homes, rent, council tax and utility arrears, depression and poor physical and mental health.
- That there is a need for better regulation of the payday lending sector, including a cap of the total cost of credit.
- That until such regulation is introduced Tower Hamlets Council should work with partners to do all it can to protect people from usurious lending.

This Council Resolves:

- That payday loan firms should be banned from setting up businesses in commercial property owned by the local authority.
- That pay day loan firms should be banned from advertising in property owned by the council.
- That payday loan firms should be banned from advertising in Council publications or on Council owned advertising boards, from all public computers.
- To promote credit unions in Tower Hamlets as community based organisations offering access to affordable credit and promoting saving.
- To work with school, community organisations, housing providers, faith organisations and providers of debt and money management advice to ensure that every resident of Tower Hamlets has access to financial advice and support.
- That the Council writes to the Mayor of London Boris Johnson, Sir Peter Hendy (Commissioner of Transport for London) and Vernon Everitt (Managing Director, Customer Experience, Marketing and Communications) informing them of the Council's decision to ban payday loan advertising in the borough and asking them to consider amending the TfL Advertising Policy to include a similar ban on all London public transport.
- Instructs the Corporate Director, CLC, to report in writing to the next full Council meeting, the steps the Council or Mayor could take to limit the proliferation and impact of high street credit outlets in the borough.
- To call on the government to introduce caps on the total lending rates that can be charged for providing credit.
- To call on the government to give local authorities the power to veto licences for high street credit agencies where they could have negative economic or social impacts on communities.
- To request the Heads of Planning and Licensing to report to the next Council meeting on ways in which officers can use powers at their disposal to ensure that the Council is doing all it can to prevent the promotion, publicity or opening of payday loan outlets or providers.
- To congratulate those involved in the campaign, and in particular the Walthamstow MP, Stella Creasy.

Motion 12.5, regarding the political situation in Bangladesh, was **withdrawn**.

The remaining motions 12.1, 12.2, 12.4, 12.6 to 12.8 and 12.10 to 12.18 were not debated due to lack of time.

### 13. URGENT MOTIONS

The Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to enable the following motions to be debated without notice:

#### 13.1 Urgent Motion on Cycle Safety

Councillor John Pierce **moved**, and Councillor M A Mukit MBE **seconded** the motion as tabled.

Councillor Harun Miah moved an amendment to add to the third point under 'this council resolves' reference to the Cable Street cycle lane, which was accepted by Councillors Pierce and Mukit.

Following debate the motion as amended was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

#### RESOLVED

This Council Notes:

- Six people have now tragically died on Cycle Superhighway 2 (CS2)
- CS2 was recently labelled an "accident waiting to happen" by the coroner investigating the recent deaths of cyclists along the route.
- London Cycling Campaign's Space for Cycling campaign calling on Transport for London and local authorities to ensure:
  - o Safer Routes for schoolchildren
  - o Streets without through motor traffic
  - o Protected space on main roads/major junctions
  - o Safe cycle routes via parks and canals
  - o 20mph speed limits
  - o Liveable town centres
- That despite the high number of accidents involving lorries Tower Hamlets Council only scores 3/5 on the London Cycling Campaign's Safer Lorries rating.
- That over 10,000 Londoners have written to the Mayor in support of the London Cycling Campaign who want an urgent review of CS2.

- Labour London Assembly Member John Biggs has led the way campaigning passionately on cycle and pedestrian safety for many years.
- That he will tomorrow host a high level CS2 Safety Summit giving local residents and cyclists who use the CS2 an opportunity to air their views on what actions should be taken and to agree a list of demands for the Mayor of London and Transport for London.
- Labour representatives in the GLA have consistently put forward tangible solutions to make London safer for cyclists including calling for segregation of cycle lanes as well as an early phase for cyclists at traffic lights.

This Council believes:

- That cycle safety is a vitally important issue not only for road users but also to support cultural change and encourage more people to take up cycling.
- John Biggs' work on the London Assembly over the past years has helped to highlight this as an important issue and that his proposals for segregated lanes and early phases for traffic lights would help to protect cyclists.

This Council further notes:

- The Mayor of Tower Hamlets' dangerously ill-designed cycle scheme in Bethnal Green which was condemned by the Cyclists in the City group as a "new contender for the worst bike lane in London" and labelling its creation as "an utter scandal" with "absolutely no excuse".
- The bike lane was littered with lamp posts and parking ticket machines blocking its path as well as having car parking
- That during the planning process Tower Hamlets Wheelers described the scheme as "[a waste of money" saying it was "unclear who was meant to be benefiting" from the work.](#)
- The IbikeLondon blog described the Bethnal Green route as "woefully inadequate; narrow, within the dooring zone of the parked cars, and ridiculously short before they spit you back in to the road from behind some parking." And actually encourage cyclists to boycott the paths as the (now narrower) roads are actually safer than the cycle route.

This Council further believes:

- That whilst the Mayor of Tower Hamlets may say the right things on cycle safety he does not understand that cycling cannot be treated as a fashionable add-on. It needs to be integrated into the heart of road design and that badly designed cycle routes, whether CS2 or the

Bethnal Green route actually put cyclists in more danger.

- That the widely condemned Bethnal Green route puts cyclists at more danger as a result of both the poor design of the cycle route and the narrower road space.

This Council resolves:

- To call on the Mayor of London to attend tomorrow's CS2 Safety Summit to hear the concerns of local residents.
- To support the proposals resulting from John Biggs' consultations with residents and cyclists at the CS2 Safety Summit and to write to the Mayor of London in support of that work.
- To call on the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to fully review the Bethnal Green cycle route project and the Cable Street cycle lane and to report back to Council on what went wrong.
- To support the London Cycling Campaign's Safer Lorries Campaign and to strongly encourage contractors used by the Council to meet its Safer Lorries conditions.

### **13.2 Urgent motion – Canvassing allegations and use of Council resources**

Councillor Rachael Saunders **moved**, and Councillor Helal Abbas **seconded** the motion as tabled.

Councillor Bill Turner moved an amendment to add under 'this council believes' – "that it is regrettable that the Mayor remained silent when asked about these matters by Councillor Rachael Saunders at the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013." This amendment was accepted by Councillors Saunders and Abbas.

Councillor Rachael Saunders **moved** and Councillor Helal Abbas **seconded** a further amendment to add under 'this council resolves' – "to call on the Head of Paid Service to carry out an audit of all Council pass holders and all individuals with access to the Council's information systems."

Following debate, the amendment moved by Councillor Saunders was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

### **RESOLVED**

This Council notes:

- The article on the LoveWapping website entitled "Tower Hamlets Homes 'staff' canvassing for Mayor Lutfur in Wapping" which includes

allegations that people purporting to be from Tower Hamlets Homes were undertaking electoral canvassing for the current Mayor of Tower Hamlets Lutfur Rahman.

- That were the allegations true this would be a significant abuse of tax payer resources and would greatly undermine the integrity of Tower Hamlets Homes staff.
- That were these people not Tower Hamlets Homes staff, and were instead impersonating them, this would constitute an offence of obtaining information by deception as well as being tantamount to electoral fraud and misrepresentation.
- In response to the allegations Tower Hamlets Homes issued a statement on their website reading:

*“We have had reports that people claiming to be Tower Hamlets Homes staff are knocking on doors, particularly in the Wapping area. All THH staff carry ID cards.”*
- Tower Hamlets Homes has initiated investigations into the allegations.

This Council believes:

- That the Mayor should cooperate fully with the THH investigation and that neither he or any parties acting on his behalf should exert any influence on those involved.
- The Mayor should make a statement on the issue confirming whether or not these people are part of or associated with his re-election team, and if not, how and why they are promoting his work and distributing campaign materials.
- The Monitoring Officer, Returning Officer and Head of Paid Service should work with THH and the police to fully investigate this matter to ensure that residents can have faith that those undertaking political campaigning are following the rules as set out by the Electoral Commission.
- That it is regrettable that the Mayor remained silent when asked about these matters by Councillor Rachael Saunders at the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

This Council Further notes:

- In the 2011 Budget the Mayor put forward proposals to cut support to democratic services by £323,000 and that this was partly funded by the banning of acknowledgement letters for members enquiries apart from in exceptional circumstances.
- A recent Freedom of Information response which revealed that whilst only 9 acknowledgement letters had been sent from opposition

councillors this financial year, 4322 have been sent by the Mayor and independent councillors at a cost of £2,221 and over a week of officer time.

This Council further believes:

- The Mayor introduced new rules banning acknowledgement letters which were purposely applied to opposition councillors but not to his own office and supporters.
- The Mayor's office categorically failed to ensure that staff working were following the correct procedures and that this has led to £2,221 of tax payer's money being wasted and over a week of Council officers time and resources being unfairly used for political gain.
- Unsolicited letters to residents should not be funded by Council resources – they are political direct mails and will be costing the tax payer thousands of pounds in postage.

This Council resolves:

- To instruct the Head of Paid Service to undertake a full investigation into why acknowledgement letters continued to be issued from the Mayor's office despite the new policy as set out in the Budget agreed by Council in 2011, and to take appropriate disciplinary action.
- To instruct the Monitoring Officer, Returning Officer and Head of Paid Service to work with THH and the police to fully investigate the concerns that THH staff may be using their position for electoral canvassing, or that they or members of Council staff are being impersonated for this purpose.
- To call upon the Mayor and independent Councillors to cooperate fully with these investigations.
- To call on the Head of Paid Service to carry out an audit of all Council pass holders and all individuals with access to the Council's information systems

The meeting ended at 11.08 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

**APPENDIX A – WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PUBLIC AND MEMBERS’  
QUESTIONS NOT PUT AT THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**6.10 Question from Mr Guy Shennan**

You will be aware of the extensive links between schools and community groups within Tower Hamlets and Palestine. Are you keen to further develop these links?

**Written response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Environment**

Thank you for your question. I agree with the sentiments of your question.

Broadening the minds of our young people by exposing them to different cultures and ways of life can only be a good thing.

**6.11 Question from Mr Seb Lynch**

With regards to the gay friendly venue the Joiners Arms on Hackney Road, why are the Council considering reducing the licensing hours of one of the very few gay pubs left in the borough?

**Written response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

Thank you for your question.

It is the Metropolitan Police who have requested a review of the current opening times of the Joiners’ Arms due to the level of crime and disorder around the venue.

We are obliged under the Licensing Act 2003, to organise a Licensing Sub Committee to determine the licensing review that has been put forward by the Metropolitan Police.

It will be up to the members of the licensing committee to determine the hours.

**8.4 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah**

Would the lead member agree with me that the system of corporate governance and accountability of free schools to parents and community has been found to be seriously flawed in the light of a number of scandals besetting free schools across the country and would the lead member confirm that the council is doing everything necessary to ensure that any free schools set up in Tower Hamlets have a system of corporate governance and parental

and community accountability far above the minimum standards currently set by the government?

**Written response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

You will know that both I and the Mayor have consistently opposed our schools turning into academies as well as the creation of Free Schools in the borough.

Free Schools fall under the control of the Secretary of State for Education and it is he who is responsible for their governance and accountability. Unfortunately we have very few powers to compel Free Schools to follow our high standards.

We are deeply aware of how the decreased regulation of schools under the Academies Act, and its side-lining of Local Council have led to serious issues.

For this reason, we have resisted conversion to Academy status where possible. We have an excellent track record of keeping schools at a good and outstanding level, and turn them around incredibly quickly when they fall behind.

The support schools receive from the Council and as part of the family of schools is the reason we have seen such impressive results and why schools in our borough are not converting to Academies.

Where Free Schools have emerged in the borough, we do everything we can to ensure our Free Schools adhere to our policies around admissions and have high standards of governance.

**8.7 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah**

What has the Mayor done about the decimation of Safer Neighbourhood police teams?

**Written response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

I want to say that we take ASB very seriously. That's why I'm proud of the fact that despite the incorrect figures being bandied about by the Labour Party; crime in Tower Hamlets has fallen MORE than in Hackney and Newham. In fact it is down 7 per cent this year. So despite Cllr Sirajul's assertions in the local paper, we won't be following their example when it comes to policing.

I'm also surprised that despite his experience working with the police, Cllr Ullah doesn't understand that it is Boris' cuts that have forced us to change the structure of our SNTs. The Mayor has written to Boris to protest these cuts in the strongest possible way.

### **8.8 Question from Councillor Kabir Ahmed**

In the light of the rising number of deaths and injuries to cyclists both in Tower Hamlets and across London, can the Lead Member tell us what can be done to improve cycle safety?

#### **Written response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member Environment**

Firstly I would like to offer my condolences to the families of all those cyclists who have been tragically killed on London's roads. I think it is unacceptable that Boris Johnson is seeking to try place the blame for these deaths on cyclists.

The Mayor has written to Boris Johnson asking for an urgent meeting to discuss measures to make the Bow roundabout safer and called on him to undertake an urgent review of the Cycle Superhighway in Tower Hamlets.

In respect of Cycle Superhighway 2, the Mayor has been lobbying TfL, the traffic authority for that road, since he came into office for improvements to crossing facilities at Bow roundabout.

The Mayor is also aware that Heavy Good's Vehicles (HGV'S) pose a particular danger for cyclists. That's why we have ensured that our highways-related contractors are fully engaged in the London-wide HGV safety accreditation scheme.

We are incorporating a requirement in all new Council contracts for HGV fleets to join this scheme which includes driver awareness training, and provision of safety equipment such as anti-drag bars and mirrors to improve drivers' vision around the vehicle.

That's not all we are doing.

We have already invested additional funding in cycling improvements in the borough in 2013-14. We are planning to deliver more quiet routes for cycling in future, with a new route along Derbyshire Street.

We have built a new bridge across the Regents Canal from Meath Gardens to Mile End Park to open up this new quiet east – west route.

Finally, we want to ensure our cyclist cycle safely. That's why the council is providing free cycle training for any adult who lives, works or studies in Tower Hamlets.

### **8.9 Question from Councillor John Pierce**

What has the Mayor of Tower Hamlets done to improve cycle safety in the borough?

**Written response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment**

This administration takes cyclists safety very seriously.

We have already invested additional funding in cycling improvements in the borough in 2013-14. We are providing free cycle training for any adult who lives, works or studies in Tower Hamlets.

We have built a new bridge across the Regents Canal from Meath Gardens to Mile End Park as a means of opening up these routes. We have planned in an extension to the Connect2 route between Bethnal Green and Bow as well as a new North-South route along the river Lea.

The Mayor is also aware that Heavy Good's Vehicles (HGV'S) pose a particular danger for cyclists. That's why we have ensured that our highways-related contractors are fully engaged in the London-wide HGV safety accreditation scheme.

We are incorporating a requirement in all new Council contracts for HGV fleets to join this scheme which includes driver awareness training, and provision of safety equipment such as anti-drag bars and mirrors to improve driver's vision around the vehicle.

The Mayor is especially concerned about the safety at Bow roundabout and has repeatedly expressed those concerns to Boris Johnson whose responsibility it is to ensure cyclists safety at Bow roundabout.

Unfortunately, we are hampered in our desire to improve cycle safety by Boris Johnson's attempt to evade his responsibility for cycle safety and lay the blame on cyclists instead.

That's why it is important that all politicians unite with cyclists groups to maximise the pressure on the Mayor of London to act now to improve cyclists safety in London.

**8.10 Question from Councillor Peter Golds**

The 4<sup>th</sup> November Edition of East End Life contained on pages 16 and 17 what can only be described as a Council-paid advert for the administration.

Will the Mayor give an undertaking to pay to Tower Hamlets the commercial rate for this double page spread, not least as the Local Audit and Accountability Bill, which received an unopposed second reading in the House of Commons, will soon receive Royal Assent and the Secretary of State will be legally empowered to direct the closure of East End Life?

**Written response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources**

The purpose of East End Life is to inform residents about their borough, highlight the work the Mayor and Council are doing with council tax payers money and promote council services and activities.

East End Life also aims to promote Tower Hamlets to build and strengthen community cohesion, encourage engagement with residents on issues ranging from public health to crime and community safety and encourage economic growth of our borough.

The purpose of the spread on 4<sup>th</sup> November was to inform residents of the excellent progress made to date on housing, education, street cleaning and culture and heritage.

Over 60% of residents read East End Life on a regular basis.

The Council's consultation on East End Life found that 72% of respondents felt positively about East End Life and over half (53%) of respondents wanted to see East End life continue as a weekly publication.

The government will have to answer for itself as to why it chose to enact primary legislation for the small handful of councils who find that council publications are the most cost effective method of reaching their populations. Local residents informing local politicians are best placed to make that choice not government ministers.

**8.11 Question from Councillor Denise Jones**

Does the Mayor agree that fraud has no place in our politics?

**Written response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources**

Yes. And as a lawyer he also believes that accusations need to be substantiated and investigated.

**8.12 Question from Councillor Harun Miah**

Would the lead member join with me in deploring the tragic deaths of cyclists in Tower Hamlets in recent weeks and in extending our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and friends and would the lead member agree that much more needs to be done both to ensure that there are safe cycle lanes preferably not shared with motorized traffic and that more is done to educate cyclists on safe cycling practice?

**Written response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment**

I do indeed deplore the tragic deaths we have witnessed over the last two weeks.

I think our measures to create more quiet zones, provide training for HGV drivers and cyclists and improve cycling infrastructure are making our roads safer for cyclists.

Unfortunately, cycle safety in the borough is being hampered by Boris Johnson who is failing to make the Superhighways safer, failing to act on Bow roundabout, and instead seeks to blame cyclists for the recent spate of deaths.

All politicians and cyclists need to unite to maximise pressure on Boris Johnson to act urgently to improve cycle safety in London.

**8.13 Question from Councillor Ann Jackson**

Can the Mayor enlighten us on the allocation of social housing in the Olympic park on a per borough basis and the rationale used for allocation?

**Written response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing**

I will provide the Cllr a detailed paper on all the numbers allocated across the full range of sites on the Olympic Park. As you can imagine it is quite a lengthy document!

However in brief, there are two key types of housing on the site:

1. Housing Funded by the GLA on the Athlete's Village
2. Wider development in the LLDC site

For the housing on the Athlete's Village Site, the allocation went through the East London Housing Partnership and were allocated through the normal Sub-Regional Nomination Agreement.

This meant that the London Borough of Newham, as the borough the site is located, gained the biggest share.

All other boroughs were deeply concerned with this approach and we felt it was not in keeping with the Olympic Spirit, which was meant to bring benefits to the whole of East London.

I personally met with the GLA and London Mayor's Advisors to request the GLA develop a special arrangement for these homes. As they are the only fully publicly funded homes on the site, we felt it should be more evenly distributed.

Currently the ELHP Board, have voted not to operate the Sub Regional Agreement and are awaiting further guidance from the GLA.

My question Cllr, is whether John Biggs the London Assembly Member can enlighten us on what he has done to lobby the GLA to improve our Olympic Allocation?

For the wider housing on the site, the LLDC has agreed that 40% of the housing will remain with the host borough and 30% through the East London Housing Partnership, which in effect currently means 70% will remain with host boroughs.

#### **8.14 Question from Councillor Dr Emma Jones**

Will the Mayor tell me how much was spent on this year's Borough Fireworks display, and why once more no outside sponsorship was sought?

#### **Written response by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture**

The final costs of this year's fireworks display have still to be finalised but are estimated at around £70,000.

Contrary to assertions of the Councillor sponsorship was, of course, actively pursued but negotiations did not result in a sponsorship deal.

#### **8.15 Question from Councillor Joshua Peck**

What assessment has the Mayor made of the supply of large family homes (over three bed) in the open market in the borough and what does he plan to do to ease the shortage to allow growing families to stay in the borough?

#### **Written response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing**

The Mayor and I are deeply concerned by the shortage of family housing in the borough. We know we need family sized housing in the social sector and in the private sector. This is why we prioritise the delivery of new family homes in our planning documents.

We have an overall target of 30% of all new housing to be suitable for families. Of the 1,005 completed homes in 2012-2013, 35% were suitable for families.

Our policy is to deliver 45% of all social housing to be of a size suitable for a family. Last year 62% were suitable for families. Within the Private Sector we have an overall target of 20% to be family sized. The latest monitoring period (2012/13), 159 private family homes were completed which was 23% of the total number of private homes in the borough.

However I am sure Cllr that you are aware that whilst we are doing all we can, the ability for families to live in the borough has been affected by a range of factors:

The Government's pernicious benefit cuts, which both I and the Mayor have resisted, as well as the over inflated property market which the London Mayor and national Government have failed to address.

### **8.16 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan**

I read an article in the local paper that says there has been a 9% per cent increase in crime since 2010. Could the lead member confirm if these figures are accurate and also what the source of these figures is?

#### **Written response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

The statistics came from the Metropolitan Police Services' website, who have recently admitted that they are incorrect.

In addition to this, the report has chosen a limited and selective interpretation of police report that formed the basis of the article that I must assume the Councillor is referencing.

2012/13 saw a reduction in overall crime and so far this year compared to last year, there has been a further fall in crime of approximately 7% and an increase in the number of crimes we have solved. Currently there are only 2 other Boroughs in London that solve more crimes than us.

### **8.17 Question from Councillor Anwar Khan**

What is the current vacancy rate in each of the borough's town centres?

#### **Written response by Councillor Shafiqul Haque, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Skills**

Vacancy rates from the most recent survey of the borough's major and district town centres, conducted in August 2013, are as follows:

Canary Wharf	1.3%
Bethnal Green	5.4%
Chrip Street	6.3%
Roman Road East	15.0%
Roman Road West	8.9%
Whitechapel	5.5%
Brick Lane	11.1%
Watney Market	11.9%
<b>All town centres</b>	<b>8.6%</b>

Total vacancy levels across the borough's town centres are lower than the London average of 11%, and significantly below the national rate of 14.1%.

The Mayor identified £355,000 for Town Centre Regeneration.

Roman Road East, the only town centre in the borough where vacancies exceed the national rate, is currently the subject of a number of town centre regeneration interventions. These include a pilot project which will identify vacant commercial premises in Roman Road and use them in cooperation with their owners to provide the setting for new business development, thus reducing vacancies and supporting new enterprises.

#### **8.18 Question from Councillor Zara Davis**

What steps is the Mayor taking to ensure that Isle of Dogs residents do not suffer increased aircraft noise pollution as a result of the works proposed in the two major London City Airport planning applications recently submitted?

#### **Written response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment**

London City Airport (LCA) and Newham have powers on this issue.

The Council's representative on the LCA Consultative Committee is Stephen Mutton, who was appointed by the General Purposes Committee on 23 November 2011, which the Labour Group control.

We are making sure LCA are aware of all our residents who will be affected on Isle Dogs and demanding that they provide insulation to those residents' properties.

Perhaps the councillor can raise the issue with his London Mayor about his plan to address this issue – what some have dubbed Boris Island.

#### **8.19 Question from Councillor M. A. Mukit, MBE**

How many incidents of anti-social behaviour in Weavers over last year?

#### **Written response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

For the year 2012 /13 there were 1,872 reports of anti-social behaviour representing a significant reduction of 11% from 2011/12. This represents about five reports a day. Figures for the year to date indicate a further 9% fall so far this year. This represents about five reports a day. Please note that this figure is of reports, which are often repeated – it is not possible to get the number of actual incidents at the moment as the MPS have recently admitted that the statistics available on their website are incorrect.

Whilst Weavers has a particularly challenging ASB problem the reduction in ASB is encouraging and reflective of the work that the Police and the Council have been doing to tackle ASB in the area. The Council and Police have a coordinated and targeted enforcement programme in this ward. As part of this, a pilot project has been started in Weavers targeting ASB and crime hot-spots using an accredited THEO and a security officer with a dog, including a drugs sniffer dog. Early evidence suggests that this is proving very effective in dissuading drug users from congregating in public areas and is just one example of how innovative thinking and more effective partnership working is having a positive impact on the quality of people's lives.

To emphasise how important the whole crime and ASB agenda is we also fund Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers to supplement the work and to deal with issues that the police will not deal with. If we did not have our officers large amounts of ASB would go unchallenged.

### **8.20 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani**

Can the lead member tell us what was the purpose of the raid on Whitechapel market some weeks ago and whether it was carried out by the UK Border Patrol or Trading Standards?

#### **Written response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

The enforcement action carried out at Whitechapel Market was led by the Metropolitan Police but support by Trading Standards and Markets staff. The intention of the intervention was to detect stolen goods and counterfeit telephones and accessories.

### **8.21 Question from Councillor Marc Francis**

Can the Deputy Mayor and Lead Member for Community Safety services tell us what action is being taken to improve the safety of residents in Fish Island using the Hackney Cut and Hertford Union canal towpath?

#### **Written response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

The canal and cut are the responsibility of the "Canal and Rivers Trust". The Trust does not light the canal path and it is not a recommended safe walking route at night. However, we are aware that people do use it to walk along and therefore we are writing to the Trust for them to reconsider their obligation to the safety of residents.

We have also supported the police in this area with a special operation using CCTV thermal cameras on the canal which resulted in a number of arrests.

**8.22 Question from Councillor Gloria Thienel**

Will the Mayor confirm for how long Social Care visits are timed within the borough?

**Written response by Councillor Abdul Asad, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing**

In Tower Hamlets the minimum visit time for commissioned home care to any vulnerable adult including the elderly, is 30 minutes. This minimum period is included in both the block and spot home care contracts. No referral will be made for a visit lasting less than 30 minutes.

The length of the home care visit will depend on the needs of the individual and many visits will be much longer than 30 minutes.

We can also confirm that the in house home care team do not provide any visits of less than 30 minutes.

**8.23 Question from Councillor Zenith Rahman**

Why does the Mayor think almost 20,000 incidences of anti-social behaviour in one year is acceptable? If he doesn't, why hasn't he acted?

**Written response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor**

Councillor Zenith Rahman clearly either doesn't understand the article, or does and is being deliberately misleading.

Firstly, the article is clearly sensationalist, as the headline figure of 20,000 later admits an actual number of 19,412. Anyone would think from your question that you just read the headline and didn't bother reading the rest of the article.

Secondly, the stated number relates to the number of *reports* of ASB to the police, **not** the number of actual incidents. The number of ASB incidents is nowhere even close to 20,000.

We also know that drug dealing and drug use is a cause for concern for our residents so we have the dealer a day initiative. No other Borough in London takes this problem as seriously as we do on behalf of our residents.

Crime in the borough is decreasing and this year it is currently 7% lower than this time last year.

**8.24 Question from Councillor Maium Miah**

Can the Mayor please tell what is being done to prepare for the 100th Anniversary of the First World War that takes place next year?

**Written response by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture**

The Council is in the process of ensuring that all council owned World War 1 memorials are in a good condition for next year's anniversary of WW1. Mayor has already announced the restoration of all war memorials in the borough and listing them under the local listing. This is going through public consultation now.

Discussions are underway to look at how we can support community initiatives linked to this anniversary including ring fencing funds from our small event grants. The Council is also looking at putting on some inclusive events of its own and is looking into what is already planned or being proposed by others and investigating external funding streams that may support activities in the borough.

**8.25 Question from Councillor Craig Aston**

Will the Mayor indicate what actions he has taken to ensure the safety of residents and pedestrians in the vicinity of 96 Narrow Street, following the erection of hoardings across the full width of the pavement, thereby forcing pedestrians to use the road?

**Written response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment**

The council takes the safety of its residents very seriously. The building site in the vicinity of 96 Narrow Street complies with the New Road and Streetworks Act 1991 therefore lawfully it is safe for pedestrians.

However, the council is aware of the concerns and is in discussions with the developer of the site on how the developer can go even further to ensure street safety for our residents.

**8.26 Question from Councillor Lutfa Begum**

Can the lead member provide a detailed list of all road resurfacing, traffic calming, road and cycle safety measures enacted in the borough over the last 18 months?

**Written response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment**

I will be happy to supply such a list which will essentially be a summary of the capital programme presented to Cabinet in previous years, to which I will add those schemes delivered by Transport for London on the red route network.

**APPENDIX B – CORRECTION TO AGENDA ITEM 11.3**  
**(Replacement Page 284)**

**Appendix 3 – 2013-14 Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators**

Prudential Indicators	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Extract from budget and rent setting reports	Actual	Actual	Original Estimate	Revised Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>						
Non – HRA	130.717	110.254	107.212	118.307	26.525	30.980
HRA	31.615	39.045	78.481	103.027	76.590	39.000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>162.332</b>	<b>149.299</b>	<b>185.693</b>	<b>221.334</b>	<b>103.115</b>	<b>69.980</b>
<b>Ratio of Financing Costs To Net Revenue Stream</b>						
Non – HRA	2.12%	2.51%	2.89%	2.50%	3.05%	3.55%
HRA	17.93%	3.98%	4.04%	4.00%	3.95%	3.95%
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Gross Debt and Capital Financing Requirement</b>						
Gross Debt	91.351	90.408	99.563	99.563	113.964	128.896
Capital Financing Requirement	231.735	225.848	229.477	229.702	238.057	283.584
Over/(Under) Borrowing	(140.384)	(129.914)	(135.440)	(130.139)	(124.093)	(154.688)
<b>In Year Capital Financing Requirement</b>						
Non – HRA	(0.986)	(5.887)	3.628	3.854	(6.492)	8.378
HRA	12.500	0.000	1.189	(1.189)	15.072	37.149
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.514</b>	<b>(5.887)</b>	<b>4.817</b>	<b>2.665</b>	<b>8.580</b>	<b>45.527</b>
<b>Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March</b>						
Non - HRA	162.060	156.173	159.802	160.027	153.310	161.688
HRA	305.875	69.675	69.675	69.675	84.747	121.896
HRA Settlement	(236.200)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>231.735</b>	<b>225.848</b>	<b>229.477</b>	<b>229.702</b>	<b>238.057</b>	<b>283.584</b>
<b>Incremental Impact of Financing Costs (£)</b>						
Increase in Council Tax (band D) per annum	3.579	0.000	0.908	0.908	0.000	1.746
Increase in average housing rent per week	1.781	5.311	5.370	5.376	5.381	0.885