

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 22ND JANUARY 2014

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

Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Helal Abbas	Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Khales Uddin 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 Craig Aston	Councillor Lesley Pavitt
Councillor Mizan Chaudhury	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Zara Davis	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Judith Gardiner	Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Carlo Gibbs	Councillor Gloria Thienel
Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs	Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	Councillor Kosru Uddin
Councillor Carli Harper-Penman	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman

The meeting commenced at 7.32 p.m.

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Lesley Pavitt, 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)
- 12.8 – Motion on Leaseholder Charges
- 5 – Petitions (5.3)
- 6 – Public Questions (6.1 to 6.3)
- 12.11 – Motion regarding Nelson Mandela
- 6 – Public Questions (6.4 to 6.9)
- 7 – Mayor’s Report
- 13.1 – Urgent motion regarding Old Poplar Town Hall
- 8 – Members’ Questions (8.1 to 8.2)
- 12.1 – Motion regarding the “March against alcohol”
- 8 – Members’ Questions (8.3)
- 13.2 – Urgent motion regarding electoral integrity
- 8 – Members’ Questions (8.4 to 8.5)
- 9.1 – Watts Grove Depot report
- 11.1 – Health and Wellbeing Board report
- 12 – Motions (12.3, 12.6, 12.10 and 12.12)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Lutfa Begum, Ann Jackson, Anwar Khan and Fozol Miah. Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were made.

Procedural Motions

At this point Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved** and Councillor Bill Turner **seconded** a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that when Item 12 (Motions) is reached the order of motions to be considered should be: 12.11, 12.3, 12.6, 12.8, 12.10, 12.12 and then all remaining motions in order”.

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

Councillor Shahed Ali then **moved** and Councillor Rania Khan **seconded** a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be

varied to debate Motion 12.9 (“Motion regarding Transport for London fare rises”) as the next item of business.

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 27 November 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 OR PAID SERVICE

The Speaker of the Council made three announcements:

- Following the recent death of Nelson Mandela, to place on record the Council’s tribute to him and recognition of the many achievements of his life.
- That this year’s Poppy Appeal had raised £13,626.96 a sum that was over £2,000 more than last year and to thank Councillor Craig Aston for co-ordinating the appeal.
- Relating to conduct at Council meetings, the Speaker reminded all those present in the public gallery of their responsibility to behave appropriately and should any Member experience problems they were to alert the Speaker without delay.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition regarding initiatives to create a sustainable environment

Mr Muhammad Haque addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment, then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He welcomed the sentiment expressed in the petition and called on all groups to work together to achieve a unified Tower Hamlets.

RESOLVED

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

5.2 Petition regarding leaseholder charges and services delivered by Tower Hamlets Homes

Ms Allison Charles addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing, then responded to the matters raised in the petition. She agreed with the need to improve the methodologies used by Tower Hamlets Homes and stated that the Council were undertaking an audit to look to do just that. She would work with Leaseholders to try and achieve a satisfactory outcome.

RESOLVED

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

Procedural Motions

At this point Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved** and Councillor Bill Turner **seconded** a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to debate Motion 12.8 ("Leaseholder Service Charges") as the next item of business.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to debate Motion 12.8 (see minute 12 below).

5.3 Petition regarding Anti-Social Behaviour at Anson House

Residents of Anson House addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor, then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He stated that he was aware of the issue and he highlighted the actions the Council were already undertaking such as the installation of new doors and THEO patrols. He promised to work with residents and to monitor the situation until a solution was found.

RESOLVED

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal, 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 in each case (except where indicated) a supplementary question were put and were responded to by the relevant Executive Members.

6.1 Question from Ms Julia Dockerill

What progress has been made by the Mayor and his Executive with respect to the application made by the Turk's Head charity to have Wapping Green formally designated as a protected, official 'village green' under the Commons Act of 2006?

Response by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture

Thank you Ms. Dockerill for your question, we have received your application and this is being reviewed across several service areas.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Ms Dockerill

The application was made a year ago. Why has it taken so long?

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

The application is being reviewed.

6.2 Question from Mr Matthew Smith

Will the Mayor inform residents as to the progress of his proposals for the Community Infrastructure Levy?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

Thank you for your question Mr Smith. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced by the government in 2010. It allows councils to raise funds by levying charges on new developments. The Council is already collecting the Mayor of London's CIL for Crossrail.

The Revised Draft Charging Schedule was approved at Cabinet on 9 October 2013; our most recent consultation closed on 2 December and we anticipate full implementation in summer/autumn this year.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Matthew Smith

The process has taken a long time. Are there any lessons to be learnt about working more co-operatively with the Mayor of London and the GLA to ensure the CIL gets implemented properly?

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

Agreeing a CIL is a complicated process. The Mayor of London is making the process more difficult by trying to collect further contributions to support Crossrail which then reduces funding for the local area. If you are concerned about this I would ask you to speak to the Mayor of London.

6.3 Question from Mrs S Morrison

What is the Mayor doing to honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you for your question Mrs Morrison.

First of all, let me say that we are all deeply saddened by the death of this great man.

Nelson Mandela's life is important not just because he ended apartheid, but because he gave inspiration to millions fighting injustice, inequality and racism across the world.

And let's not pretend that the fight for racial equality is over. Even here in modern Britain, prejudice against Black and Minority Ethnic Communities remains.

There is a motion on tonight's agenda that lays out what we want to do, including naming a building in the new Blackwall Reach development after Mr Mandela.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Mrs S Morrison

Can you please ensure that his legacy is commemorated as part of Black History month?

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

Yes, we will look to do that.

Procedural Motion

At this point Councillor Ohid Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Alibor Choudhury **seconded** a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to debate Motion 12.11 ("Motion on Nelson Mandela") as the next item of business.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to debate Motion 12.11 (see minute 12 below).

6.4 Question from Mr Shah Ahmed

What is the Mayor doing about behaviour in Full Council meetings?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you for your question Mr Ahmed.

This meeting is run by the Chair who is a member of the majority Labour Group. It is their job to regulate councillors' behaviour.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Shah Ahmed

What comment do you have on the appalling targeting of perfectly legitimate volunteers that I saw at the last Council meeting?

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

I was shocked by the behaviour. On the one hand people are encouraged to get involved in local democracy but then this happens when they do.

6.5 Question from Ms Nasmin Sultana

Can The Mayor tell me why Poplar Business Park went to appeal and was granted planning consent and what losses the council incurred?

[Note: A similar question was also received from Mr Shahin Uddin. Ms Sultana's question is listed above as it was received first. Mr Uddin will receive a written response to his question after the meeting.]

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

Thank you Ms. Sultana for your question. I'm afraid I will have to ask my colleagues on the other benches to explain why they felt they knew better than our experienced planning officers and why, despite knowing that in this national political climate the Government is consistently ruling in favour of developers, they chose to make this decision.

Development plans for Poplar Business Park were submitted to the Strategic Development Committee in March 2012 with officers recommending it be approved. The opposition refused, on the basis that the percentage of affordable housing was at 25% well below our policy levels.

At the April committee developers increased the level of affordable housing to 28%; however the Committee still refused permission. The developers decided to appeal the application by means of a Public Inquiry in July 2012.

The appeal was called in by the Secretary of State and in September 2013 he issued his decision to uphold the appeal. More importantly the Secretary of State gave planning permission, with only 20% affordable housing.

The irresponsibility of the planning committee led to a loss of 16 affordable rented units. Moreover the appeal cost us almost £100,000 to defend this decision.

I'm sure you will be glad to know that despite the, at best naive and irresponsible and at worst politically malevolent, behaviour – the Mayor is still on target to deliver 4,000 homes over his term.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Ms Nasmin Sultana

This has happened at the same time as we are being asked to make service cuts. Why are they doing this?

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

I suggest you put that question to the GLA Member, he may be able to help.

6.8 Question from Kois Miah

Is the Lead Member aware of the campaign against the organisation "Student Rights" and will he join us in condemning their divisive rhetoric and tactics?

Response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Thank you for your question Mr Miah. This organisation has been condemned by the National Union of Students, among others, for conducting anti-Muslim witch-hunts.

It is backed by some very unsavoury Neo-cons and seems hell-bent on attacking the freedom of Muslim students.

Summary of Supplementary Question by Kois Miah

The local MP Jim Fitzpatrick is on the board, do you call on him to resign?

Summary of Councillor Oliur Rahman's response to the Supplementary Question

I am not aware of who is on the board but if Mr Fitzpatrick is then I would call on him to consider his position.

6.9 Question from Mr Azmal Hussain

Restaurants in Brick Lane have been trading for the last 50 years, we run an honest and transparent business, Our customers are sensible and polite customers, they do not and have not in the past created any anti-social behaviour in the area. Recently the bars, clubs, pubs and off licenses have given rise to anti-social behaviour, street urination in the area. Then why have the restaurants been included in the Saturation policy, when we were not consulted fully in the saturation policy consultation, and feel again the Bangladeshi restaurants have been targeted?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you Mr Hussain for your question. The objective of the cumulative impact policy is to manage anti-social behaviour in the area and to take this into account when issuing licences. This policy was formulated to reduce anti-social behaviour, not to target restaurants.

There was an extensive consultation for over 3 months from the 21st December 2012 to 22nd March 2013 on the saturation policy. A public meeting was also held in Toynbee Hall.

All Bangladeshi restaurants that hold a license were written to individually and informed about the consultation. Bangladeshi restaurant owners attended public meetings and did object to the policy. The local community other licence holders and residents forums also attended the consultation meetings.

The consultation resulted in 81.4% of responses in favour of the introduction of the cumulative impact policy and specifically 69.9% of responses considered that all on-licenced premises (restaurants etc.) should be included in the saturation policy.

Since implementation of the policy no one has lost their licence and there has not been any complaint about the policy. We invite and welcome any comments if anyone would like to raise any issues about the policy.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Mr Azmal Hussain

Can the saturation policy be suspended until we can have a consultation and the chance to apply for adequate planning permissions?

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

I am happy to meet with you to discuss the issues you have raised.

Question 6.6 was not put at the meeting as the questioner was not present. The Service Head, Democratic Services indicated that a written response would be provided. [Note: the written response is included in Appendix A to these minutes.]

Question 6.7 was withdrawn.

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council meeting, extending a welcome to all present.

In particular the Mayor echoed the Speaker's tribute to Nelson Mandela and he also highlighted the significance of Holocaust Memorial Day to the East End of London.

The Leader of the Majority Group and the Leader of each Minority Group then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Procedural Motion

At this point Councillor Tim Archer **moved** and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded** a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.15, Rule 13.1 be suspended to enable an urgent motion calling for an investigation into Old Poplar Town Hall 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 in each case (except where indicated) a supplementary question were put and were responded to by the relevant Executive Member.

8.1 Question from Councillor Denise Jones

Sadly for the second year running we are meeting after more stabbings in Wapping over the Christmas period. This year's incident came at an illegal rave which spiralled out of control. Will the Mayor tell us what steps he has taken since he came to power to crack down on this type of activity as well as to combat knife crime on our streets?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you for your question Councillor Jones. Knife crime is a serious issue, not just in Tower Hamlets but across London. Boris Johnson's police cuts are making it harder to take on this issue.

As soon as I heard of it, I ordered the Head of Paid Service to work with the police and check the security of vacant properties in the borough and to improve intelligence to crack down on these sorts of gatherings.

However, we are working hard to do what we can with what we have. We've invested £2.2m in new THEOs and £2m in new police officers.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Denise Jones

How are you going to prevent future incidents like this from happening?

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

We know the problems and are trying to solve them.

8.2 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

Will the Mayor explain the reasons for the conflicting statements issued by the council in his name regarding the march against the sale of alcohol organised by Anjem Choudhary in Brick Lane during December?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

It is not true that conflicting statements were issued.

The initial response issued by our communications team was not cleared by the Mayor and should not have been sent out.

For the record the Mayor approved the following statement in the aftermath of the demonstration:-

"As part of our pledge to 'No Place for Hate', we oppose all groups that seek to impose their views on and bring division to our communities. Council staff worked with the police to ensure that the businesses, residents and visitors on Brick Lane were protected during the demonstration."

Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Peter Golds

Conflicting statements were issued. What happened between the two statements being issued? The public should know and the Mayor should tell us.

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

You are not looking at the bigger picture. We want to make sure that everyone who lives and works in the borough feels safe.

Procedural Motions

At this point Councillor Peter Golds **moved** and Councillor Tim Archer **seconded** a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to debate Motion 12.1 ("Motion regarding the Mayor's statements on the "March against alcohol") as the next item of business.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to debate Motion 12.1 (see minute 12 below).

8.3 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders

At the Council's last meeting the Mayor sat for over an hour whilst serious questions were asked about the integrity and legality of his re-election campaign. The Mayor has also refused to attend any of the ten Overview and Scrutiny meetings this municipal year. Does he not realise that he, like us, was elected by the people of Tower Hamlets and that he has a duty to justify his decisions both to residents and the councillors they have elected to hold him to account?

Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources

All questions were answered by Cabinet members. This is called delegation. All of your absurd and unsupported allegations have been denied by the Mayor both in print and at the last Cabinet meeting.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders

You have not denied this and I have not received any response written or verbally. Do you pay anyone to canvass for you, how do you pay for them, when will the Mayor submit a campaign costs declaration to the Electoral Commission and are there any links between the grants and his campaign funding?

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

There is nothing improper going on but I do have information on a 'cash for nominations' scheme going on in the Labour group.

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 the integrity of the upcoming elections 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).

8.5 Question from Councillor Joshua Peck

Is the Deputy Mayor happy with the level of dog fouling and street cleanliness in his ward and in the borough as a whole?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you for your question Councillor Joshua Peck. No amount of dog fouling is ever acceptable, and so as long as there is even one piece of dog fouling that goes unreported or is seen by a resident, I can never be ‘happy’ with the level of dog fouling in my ward, or in the borough.

This is why we are doing lots of good things and as a result the borough is the cleanest it has ever been.

Summary of Supplementary Question from Councillor Joshua Peck

I am not surprised that the Deputy Mayor says does not want to see any dog fouling on any street in the borough because when I asked if the Council’s dog foul cleaning machine could visit my ward I was told it was too busy elsewhere. And when I asked where it went I was given a list of eleven streets – the same eleven streets every day. And where are those eleven streets? In the Deputy Mayor’s ward. In fact it starts and ends on the same street, which is the street on which the Deputy Mayor lives. Isn’t there a stench that hangs over this administration – the stench of the abuse of power?

Summary of Councillor Ohid Ahmed’s response to the Supplementary Question

Our policy is to introduce initiatives to make our streets safe and clean. It is for officers to implement those initiatives, not for members to make specific instructions to carry out the work.

Procedural Motion

At this point Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved** and Councillor Bill Turner **seconded** a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.9 the Council move on to the next business”.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**. The Council therefore proceeded to Agenda Item 9.

[Note: Question 8.4 was not put at the meeting as the questioner, Councillor Fozol Miah, was not in attendance. Questions 8.6 to 8.29 below were not put due to lack of time. The Service Head, Democratic Services indicated that written responses would be provided. [Note: The written responses are included in Appendix A to these minutes.]

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

9.1 Watts Grove Depot

The Council considered a reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its review of the Watts Grove Depot Mayoral Decision and related issues. An addendum report, including minor amendments to the Committee’s findings as agreed at their meeting on 20th January, was tabled.

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded**, the recommendations in the report as amended.

RESOLVED

1. That the Council notes the amendment agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20th January to the first bullet point of item 2.0 of the Committee’s report to read as follows:-
 - The decision to use the model selected for the Watts Grove Depot redevelopment was flawed, and vulnerable to potentially foreseeable changes. The consequence of these decisions has seen the council incur costs of approximately £308,000 (as of 5th November), and lose out on the opportunity to provide 149 affordable homes. A partnership with an RP, or another more economically viable alternative model, would have been a better option. However, to pursue this now would involve starting the full and costly process again from the beginning.
2. That subject to the above amendment, the Council endorse the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the report; and that the Mayor and Cabinet Members be requested to act accordingly.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved** and Councillor Bill Turner **seconded** a procedural motion “That under Procedure Rule 15.11.7 the meeting be extended by up to 30 minutes to enable business up to and including motion 12.12 to be considered.” The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

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

There was no business under this heading.

11. OTHER BUSINESS**11.1 Appointment of Members to the Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Council considered the report of the Service Head, Democratic Services on appointments to the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board.

During debate Councillor Denise Jones was nominated as the non-executive majority group councillor to serve on the Board.

RESOLVED

1. That the Council agree the appointment of co-opted members to the Tower Hamlets Wellbeing Board as set out at paragraph 1.3 of the circulated report.
2. That Councillor Denise Jones be appointed to serve as the non-executive majority group councillor on the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board.
3. That the Council note the other appointments to the Board which take effect by operation of statute.
4. That the above appointments shall be for the remainder of the current municipal year.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**12.1 Motion regarding the Mayor’s statements on the “March against alcohol”**

Councillor Peter Golds **moved**, and Councillor Tim Archer **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- The possibility of an increase in community tensions arising from the well-publicised “March against alcohol” in Brick Lane on December 13th.
- That Brick Lane is known worldwide for its vibrant restaurant offer, and that the beginning of the Christmas period is a highpoint for the local economy.

This Council believes:

- This event would intimidate restaurants and their customers, and attract other extremist groups to the area
- Policing the event was a waste of valuable police resources, with a reduction in the availability of officers across the borough at a particularly busy time.

This Council also notes:

- That the initial statement issued in the name of the Mayor was “We strongly believe in the right to free speech and association, and I am pleased that, with the Police’s support, this group were able to exercise that right whilst upholding respect for our communities, which is the hallmark of our ‘No Place for Hate’ pledge.”

This Council also believes:

- That this was an extraordinary response in view of the threats to legitimate local businesses and their customers who were intent on enjoying a pre-Christmas lunch completely within the law.

This Council further notes:

- That following hostile publicity after the release of this statement an amended statement was published, stating “As part of our pledge to ‘No Place for Hate’, we oppose all groups that seek to impose their views on and bring division to our communities. Council staff worked with the Police to ensure that the businesses, residents and visitors on Brick Lane were protected during the demonstration.”

This Council further believes:

- That the confusion around the Mayor’s position on this important issue shames the Council, reflecting poorly on his office.

- That there are a number of unanswered questions as to how the original inappropriate statement came to be released, including:-
 1. Why, with a multi-million pound publicity budget he makes such different statements?
 2. Who authorised the initial statement in his name?
 3. What particular event or events the following week encouraged him to change the statement?

This Council resolves:

- To condemn the Mayor's original statement, and the confusion around its subsequent retraction.
- To instruct officers to present a report to the next Council meeting, outlining the procedural failures that led to this debacle; and the steps to be taken to prevent a repeat.

12.3 Motion regarding Cost of Living

Councillor Rachael Saunders **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED

This Council believes:

- That families in Tower Hamlets are feeling the pinch, with prices rising faster than wages, and too many local people finding it difficult to access decent work.
- That the Conservative-led Government is complacent about the difficulties people are facing, as demonstrated by Ian Duncan Smith's refusal to even speak to representatives from the Trussell Trust who run many of the country's food banks.
- That it is shameful that people in the UK are dependent on food banks
- That Lutfur Rahman is weak and out of touch with the real needs of local people – whilst his administration has plenty of short term gimmicks, he has done little to tackle the real issues that local people face.

This Council notes:

- That despite much fanfare at launch, Tower Hamlets Power has so far only helped 237 residents with their electricity bills despite spending over £12,000 on publicity for the scheme and plans to spend a further £37,351 promoting it this month.
- That Lutfur Rahman's cuts to funding for already overstretched advice services have left many families with no access to support. Whilst other London boroughs such as Labour controlled Camden and Islington are increasing their funding for these kind of advice services in light of increasing demand.
- That CAB applied for funding from the events grants funds, but was refused yet the Mayor instead decided to fund events by commercial media organisations.
- That the weak, insular approach of the current administration means that opportunities to support local people in tough times are being missed.
- That most high streets in Tower Hamlets feature at least one pay day loan shop.
- That with a Mayor that refuses to answer questions in public, Tower Hamlets has little chance of being taken seriously by business or other local stakeholders.

This Council resolves:

- To support Ed Miliband's cost of living pledge, which sets out the real action a Labour government would take:
 1. Stop the Government's raid on pensioners and block its £40,000 tax cut to 14,000 millionaires
 2. End rail rip-offs by capping fares increases on every route
 3. Force the energy firms to cut gas and electricity bills for 4 million over-75s
 4. Stop excessive fees charged by banks and low cost airlines
 5. Defend working families from the raid on their tax credits by reversing the Government's pension tax break for those earning over £150,000
- To condemn Boris Johnson's rip off rises to fares on tubes and buses.

- To campaign for effective benefit take up advice for Tower Hamlets residents and to call upon the Council to use the communications tools at their disposal for the benefit of local people not the ludicrous self-promotion of the Mayor.
- To call on Lutfur Rahman to reconsider the grant funding that goes to his cronies, and to reinstate the previous levels of funding to our advice services.
- To call on the Council to provide logistical support to those organising food banks, including offering the use of Council buildings for collections.
- To condemn Lutfur Rahman for his failure to work with business to secure apprenticeships or work experience opportunities in the borough, or to secure Living Wage commitments for Tower Hamlets workers outside the Town Hall.

12.6 Motion regarding commercialisation of the Borough's public spaces

Councillor Joshua Peck **moved**, and Councillor Abdal Ullah **seconded**, the motion as printed on the agenda.

During debate, Councillor Peter Golds proposed a minor amendment to the motion, substituting 'Millwall Park' for 'Island Gardens' in the 3rd sub-point of bullet point 5 under 'This Council notes'. This was accepted by Councillors Joshua Peck and Abdal Ullah who altered their motion accordingly. Following further debate the substantive motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- That Tower Hamlets is a densely populated borough where many people don't have their own gardens
- That an increasing number of Tower Hamlets residents live at or near the poverty line, with all of their disposable income going on housing, heating and food, leaving nothing left over for leisure or entertainment
- That many of our residents rely on free access to our parks, open spaces and community facilities for recreation, physical and mental health and community cohesion
- That parks and open spaces represent important public places for people of all communities to come together strengthening community cohesion and building One East End.

- That the current Mayor has been increasingly using the borough's parks, open spaces and community facilities to raise money, at the expense of their intended purpose as a community asset and public service, including:
 - Letting a four year contract to Lovebox for seven days of festivals each year in Victoria Park, despite significant complaints from residents about disturbance from events, huge damage to the Park and significant spikes in crime when Lovebox takes place each year;
 - allowing a cider company to run a pop-up bar in Victoria Park;
 - renting out Millwall Park for an Oktoberfest event;
 - changing the use of the Mile End Park Arts Pavilion from a community art gallery to a wedding and commercial events venue
 - and a proposal to allow parties on Trinity Square Gardens, adjacent to the war memorial, which attracted national condemnation.

- That whilst many residents accept the need for revenue-raising activities as council funding is severely cut by the Government, the nature and frequency of many of these commercial events is having a disproportionate effect on the ability of residents to use and enjoy them.

- That the proportion of funding raised from these facilities that is reinvested in them is dropping dramatically – for example, falling from 73% of funding raised by Victoria Park in 2010 being reinvested in the Park and free events in it to just 29% in 2012.

- That free events for residents put on by the Council – which also used to be paid for by these funds – is also reducing:
 - The popular Paradise Gardens was cancelled by the Mayor in 2012
 - The Victoria Park fireworks were cancelled by the Mayor in 2012, on the pretence that this was to allow three fireworks events to take place across the borough, but in 2013, only one event took place, and that the number of residents attending the fireworks has dropped from 80,000 in 2011 to just 16,000 in 2013

This Council believes:

- The primary and over-riding purpose of our public parks, open spaces and community facilities should be for the free and unfettered use of our residents

- Some commercial use of these facilities is acceptable as long as it is done in a way that does not unduly impact on users and local residents

This Council further notes:

- That on 16 May 2012 this Council resolved to amend the Open Spaces Strategy to put reasonable restrictions on the use of parks and open spaces for commercial events, in order to protect their primary purpose
- That as a result of the Council's process for resolution of disputes between the Council and the Executive, the Open Spaces Strategy was referred back to the Mayor for consideration and should have then been brought back to Council for a final decision, yet 19 months later, it still has not been considered by the Mayor and been brought back to Council.

This Council resolves:

- To restate its position that reasonable limits must be put on the use of open spaces and community facilities for commercial events
- To instruct the Head of Paid Service to report in writing to all Councillors as to why a revised Open Spaces Strategy, implementing the decision of Council on 16 May 2012 has not been put forward to the Mayor to consider and then brought to Council.

12.8 Motion regarding Leasehold Service Charges

Councillor Marc Francis **moved**, and Councillor Carlo Gibbs **seconded**, the motion as printed in the agenda, incorporating a number of tabled amendments.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **moved**, and Councillor Kabir Ahmed **seconded**, an amendment to the motion as follows:-

“Under This Council Notes:

Under:

- In Spring 2013, the St Stephen's Estate Leaseholders Association published a damning scrutiny report, which exposed the failures to implement the recommendations in the original Beevers and Struthers Audit.

Insert:

- On the 16th October 2012, the Policy Steering Group requested a review of the Beevers and Struthers Report.

After this Council Notes:

Insert:

This Council further notes:

- The Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing have raised concerns with Tower Hamlets Homes on service charges and are working with Tower Hamlets Homes and the Project Steering Group to reduce leaseholder service charges in the future.
- That Labour Councillors to date attended 3 out of 22 PSG meetings.

Also add after believes section:

This Council further believes:

- The Mayor and Cabinet Member should continue to work with Tower Hamlets Homes and the Project Steering Group to correct any past wrong or unreasonable leaseholder charges.
- The Mayor and Cabinet Member should continue to investigate whether Tower Hamlets Homes are charging in accordance of the Tenant and Landlord Act and the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act to secure reasonable leaseholder charges.
- Those Councillors who are nominated to attend the PSG meetings must do so.

Delete from This Council resolves to call on the Mayor to:

- Explain why a 17 per cent 'overhead' has been introduced across most Heads of Charge;

Replace with:

- Call on Tower Hamlets Homes to stop charging the 17 per cent 'Overhead' until a thorough investigation has been undertaken.

Add to resolves section:

This Council resolves to support the Mayor and Lead Member for Housing to:

- Secure corrections from Tower Hamlets Homes to leaseholders of service charges for 2011/12012 where actuals proved to be unreasonable or wrong.
- Investigate ways in which Tower Hamlets Homes can reduce leaseholder service charges in the future whilst not impacting on front line services."

Following debate the amendment moved by Councillor Rabina Khan was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- In 2008, Full Council agreed a motion authorising the Lead Member for Housing to commission an independent audit of leasehold service charges following concerns about the two-thirds increase in the level of Management & Administration fees, numerous historic disputes over the costs recharged and a Scrutiny Review which called for much greater transparency and accountability in the calculation of service charges;
- In 2009, a Project Steering Group (PSG) involving councillors, Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), Tower Hamlets Leaseholders Association (THLA) and other leaseholders agreed detailed Terms of Reference for that audit, commissioned Beevers & Struthers Ltd to carry it out;
- In spring 2010, THH attempted unilaterally to introduce new methodology for the calculation of management fees and a new policy to charge to ground floor leaseholders for services they did not benefit from, which was blocked by the Lead Member;
- In summer 2010 a draft version was produced for the PSG, identifying a series of very challenging issues for THH around the management of leasehold services, value for money, caretaking, repairs and maintenance, management and administration fees, and several Service Levels Agreements with LBTH;
- However, publication of the final audit report was delayed by the Mayoral Election in October 2010 and not finally signed off by the PSG until May 2011, by which time LBTH/THH had already begun consultation on a "Leasehold Policy Review" which was claimed to have been based on its findings;
- The Mayor and Lead Member subsequently established a Leasehold Action Plan Working Group (LAPWG), including representatives of leaseholders to bring together the Beevers & Struthers' recommendations, those of the Audit Commission and THH's own Leaseholder Service Improvement Group, and a Statement of Intent was agreed by all those involved to implement the 54 recommendations or agree an alternative remedy;
- Over the next 18 months, just five of the 54 recommendations were implemented and in October 2012, THH sent leaseholders "actuals", which included significantly increased charges in most areas, particularly block/estate cleaning, a 17 per cent "Overhead" fee and new SLAs with LBTH. They were told these costs had been calculated on the B&S audit and had actually been "dampened" and so would increase further over the next two years;

- In spring 2013, THH leaseholders published a damning scrutiny report, which exposed the failure to implement the recommendations in the original Beevers & Struthers audit;
- In response, the current Lead Member for Housing & Development, is now proposing an “review” of the implementation of the recommendations of the original B&S audit and the Mayor is commissioning an audit of latest “actuals” at a cost of around a further £15,000.

This Council believes:

- The Mayor and THH have not implemented the recommendations contained in the independent audit in accordance with the agreed Statement of Intent and that the original aim of increasing transparency and accountability has been lost;
- Leaseholders should be fully recharged for the costs of the services they receive, but that the 2011/12 “actuals” are not based on the methodology set out in the recommendations in the B&S audit, but are instead opaque and represent very poor value for money;

This Council resolves to call on the Mayor to:

- Explain why only 5 out of 54 of the recommendations arising from the B&S audit have so far been implemented;
- Explain why an 17 per cent “Overhead” has been introduced across most Heads of Charge;
- Justify the Service Level Agreements between LBTH and THH and explain what action is being taken to ensure best value;
- Instruct THH to publish a report detailing how the actions it has taken since October 2010 to achieve “savings” have resulted in reduced costs to council leaseholders and tenants.

12.10 Motion regarding Local Authorities Mental Health Challenge

Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Rachel Saunders **seconded**, the motion as printed on the agenda.

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

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- 1 in 6 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.
- The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020.
- Mental ill health costs some £105 billion each year in England alone.
- People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.
- There is often a circular relationship between mental health and issues such as housing, overcrowding, employment, family problems or debt.
- The local Mental Health Strategy notes that “Tower Hamlets has amongst the highest levels of mental health need in England.”
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has recently investigated the links between mental health and housing, such as how the lettings system does not always appropriately assess and respond to mental health problems as a priority need.

This Council further notes:

- Despite signing up to the Time to Change pledge to tackle mental health discrimination, Executive Members continue to use stigmatizing mental health language in public meetings and press releases, which undermines the aims of Time to Change and perpetuates negative attitudes to those with mental health problems.

This Council believes:

- As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.
- Mental health should be a priority across all the local authority’s functions, from public health, adult social care and children’s services to housing, planning and public realm.
- All Councillors, whether members of the Executive or Scrutiny and in our community and casework roles, can play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis. This includes never using negative mental health language for political purposes, particularly directed as an insult.

This Council resolves:

To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.

We commit to:

1. Appoint an elected member as 'mental health champion' across the Council – this would be a Full Council appointee
2. Identify a 'lead officer' for mental health to link in with colleagues across the Council
3. Follow the implementation framework for the mental health strategy where it is relevant to the Council's work and local needs
4. Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community
5. Work with the NHS to integrate health and social care support
6. Promote wellbeing and initiate and support action on public mental health
7. Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community
8. Encourage positive mental health in our schools, colleges and workplaces
9. Proactively engage and listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health
10. Restate the commitment to the Time to Change pledge and pledge to never use stigmatizing mental health language for political purposes
11. Introduce mental health awareness training for all elected members and promote the local authority challenge guide, to ensure we can support our constituents.
12. Introduce training for frontline staff, such as housing and lettings teams, so they can identify and support people with mental health needs appropriately.

12.11 Motion on Nelson Mandela

Councillor Rabina Khan **moved**, and Councillor Rania Khan **seconded**, the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor David Snowdon **moved**, and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded**, an amendment to the motion as follows:-

“To delete the first bullet point of ‘This Council believes’ and replace it with:

‘Nelson Mandela died perceived universally as a courageous and principled politician whose example in resisting oppression and inequality inspires all those struggling for racial equality and social justice’.”

Following debate the amendment moved by Councillor David Snowdon was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, a further amendment to the motion as follows:-

“Under this Council resolves:

Delete the second point and replace with:

- To call on the Mayor to allocate a budget from the recently increased Community Events Fund to run an educational project for the borough's schools in Black History month later this year, focused on Nelson Mandela's legacy.
- To instruct officers to draw up options for a permanent tribute to Nelson Mandela in the borough and to present these to full Council in advance of Black History month.
- To call on the Mayor of London and LLDC to name a street in the new Olympic park after Nelson Mandela in recognition of sports power to unite communities.”

Following debate the amendment moved by Councillor Carlo Gibbs was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED

The Council notes:

- On the 5th December 2013, South African anti-apartheid revolutionary Nelson Mandela passed away.

- Mandela served 27 years in prison after being convicted of attempting to overthrow the state while an international campaign lobbied for his release.
- After his release, Mandela joined negotiations with President FW de Klerk to abolish apartheid and establish multiracial elections, lead the ANC into victory where he became South Africa's first black president and won the Nobel Prize for Peace.

The Council believes:

- Despite Margaret Thatcher describing Nelson Mandela as a 'terrorist', and the refusal of the Tory government at the time to unite with the rest of Europe in imposing sanctions on South Africa, Nelson Mandela died perceived universally as a courage and principled politician whose example in resisting oppression and inequality inspires all those struggling for racial equality and social justice.
- In a borough where so many different races live side by side, Mandela's determination to create racial equality and unite the black and white people of South Africa holds a particular importance.

The Council resolves:

- To remember Nelson Mandela, in particular, to use every relevant occasion to remind the young of the borough of the importance of both fighting for their beliefs and reconciliation.
- To call on the Mayor to allocate a budget from the recently increased Community Events Fund to run an educational project for the borough's schools in Black History month later this year, focused on Nelson Mandela's legacy.
- To instruct officers to draw up options for a permanent tribute to Nelson Mandela in the borough and to present these to full Council in advance of Black History month.
- To call on the Mayor of London and LLDC to name a street in the new Olympic park after Nelson Mandela in recognition of sports power to unite communities.

12.12 Motion regarding Protecting Community Pubs

Councillor Denise Jones **moved**, and Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs **seconded**, the motion as printed on the agenda.

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

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- That in addition to the provision of its own services the Council should support through its policies and the exercise of its powers a network of well-run community facilities, including shops, pubs, advice centres, places of worship and other local forums and services which are valued by residents. As an example of these, community pubs provide a valuable community service for those who choose to use them.
- Twenty-six pubs close every week across the country. In Tower Hamlets many pubs have already been converted to flats or stand empty.
- Recently local pubs such as The Sun in Bethnal Green and the Britannia pub in Mile End have closed down, to the disappointment of local residents.
- Pubs inject an average of £80,000 into their local economy each year and support almost one million UK jobs, 46% of whom are 16 – 24 year olds.
- That whilst some pubs can have anti-social behaviour problems which the Council should challenge, the majority offer a positive contribution to our borough and are part of a balanced and inclusive community offering that helps to define the local quality of life.

This Council further notes:

- The recently adopted Managing Development Document policy DM8 specifies that social and community facilities, such as public houses, will be protected where they meet an identified local need and the buildings are suitable for their use.
- That while conversion of pubs to residential use would be resisted as contrary to planning policy, this does not automatically mean such applications would be rejected.
- Residents often feel they have no opportunity to prevent their local pubs from being sold off or converted to flats.
- The demolition of pubs is classed as “permitted development” means planning permission is not required. Between 2003 and 2012, 414 former pubs were demolished in London alone.

This Council believes:

- Local pubs are a hugely important community hub, bringing local people together and providing social inclusion opportunities.
- While pubs that cause antisocial behaviour should be subject to enforcement action, well managed community pubs should be protected by the council.

This Council resolves:

- To work with residents to list local pubs as Assets of Community Value under the Localism Act, giving greater protection against pubs being sold off to developers
- To support the Sustainable Communities Act proposal: "That the Secretary of State help protect community pubs in England by ensuring that planning permission and community consultation are required before community pubs are allowed to be converted to betting shops, supermarkets and pay-day loan stores or other uses, or are allowed to be demolished."
- To work together with Local Works and the Campaign for Real Ale to gain support for the proposal from other councils in the region and across the country.

Motions 12.2, 12.4, 12.5, 12.7, 12.9, 12.13 and 12.14 were not debated due to lack of time.

13. URGENT MOTIONS

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

13.1 Urgent motion calling for an investigation into Old Poplar Town Hall

Councillor Peter Golds **moved**, and Councillor Tim Archer **seconded**, the motion as tabled.

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

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- The former Poplar Town Hall on the corner of Poplar High Street and Woodstock Terrace, E14 is an iconic building dating back to the 19th Century. It was the administrative home of Poplar Borough Council 1900-1938, and as such is a listed building.

- That in 2008 the former Poplar Town Hall was put up for disposal and the Cabinet stipulated that “it should be advertised locally to allow local groups to make an offer”
- That subsequently on 12 January 2011 officers were given authority to dispose of the property in the open market.
- That according to answers provided by the council, the property was “openly and widely” marketed by external agents on 9 May 2011; and a wide range of bids was received on 8 July 2011.
- The property was, according to officers, sold to the highest bidder. The transaction was completed on 11 November 2011. The sum paid by the highest bidder was £876,000
- That this price was not much more than the price of a family home nearby, for example on 6 May 2011 a three bedroom semi-detached house close by in Woodstock Terrace was sold for £585,000
- That the former Poplar Town Hall contains offices, a full size council chamber, and even a self-contained flat, and is obviously substantially larger than a three bedroom semi-detached house.

This Council further notes:

- That the owners of the successful bidder and ultimate purchaser, Dreamstar, are well known to the Mayor and members of his administration.
- That planning permission and Listed Building Consent were granted on the 3rd July 2013 for a change of use from office (B1) to hotel (C1) under Officers’ delegated authority.
- That the change of use from office to hotel use will result in an increase in value of the building by several million pounds.

This Council believes:

- That it is entirely inappropriate to grant this change of use using delegated power, considering the public interest in the sale of the building and the effect such a change of use would have on local residents.
- That there remain unanswered questions as to the relationship between the current owner/occupier, and the administration.
- That no answer has been given as to whether in the initial marketing documents bidders were informed that the council would entertain a change of use of this type.

This Council resolves:

- To instruct the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, in conjunction with the District Auditor, to undertake an immediate investigation into the marketing and sale of the former Poplar Town Hall
- That this investigation should include details of all meetings and correspondence between officers of the council, councillors, the Mayor,

bidders, and those responsible for publicising the sale; and that these details should be published.

- The investigation should pay particular attention to any potential conflicts of interest, etc not properly disclosed.
- That the investigation should appoint an independent property valuer to establish the 2011 valuation of the building with B1 office use and C1 Hotel use, and the 2014 valuation of the building with C1 Hotel use.
- That the investigation should, in view of the seriousness of this situation, produce a report to be considered by O&S on March 4th and the full Council at their meeting on March 26th.

13.2 Urgent motion on the integrity of upcoming elections

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

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

RESOLVED

This Council notes that:

- Following recent updates from the Head of Paid Service this motion seeks to amend the scope of the investigations launched at the last Council meeting.
- Two weeks ago the Electoral Commission identified Tower Hamlets as one of 16 boroughs at greater risk of electoral fraud in the 2014 local and mayoral elections.
- This week the Council will launch a new candidate protocol to help reassure voters that the upcoming elections will be free, fair and without fraud.
- At the Council's November meeting a motion was passed which raised serious questions about the conduct of the Mayor's re-election campaign.
- Thus far our understanding is that the ongoing Council investigation has no reason to doubt the account given on the LoveWapping Blog.
- A THH investigation launched following this incident, but prior to the Council motion, found no evidence to suggest that they actually were THH staff.
- The police are looking into the allegations and have yet to draw a final conclusion.
- It is possible to assume that these women were impersonating THH Officers in order to convince residents to divulge information they wouldn't have given to political campaigners.

We further note that:

- Despite their efforts Council officers have been unable to identify these canvassers.

- Subsequent to the canvassing Mr Baines received Members Enquiry acknowledgements and then responses from the Mayor.
- This means that the information from the canvassers was passed to the Mayor's office for processing, and that therefore a record will exist in the Mayor's office.
- This also means that the Mayor's office will have knowledge of how it received this information and will be able to help identify the canvassers or will know persons who can identify them.

This Council believes that:

- Ongoing attempts by the Council to prevent electoral fraud at the upcoming elections will be undermined by the perception that legitimate concerns have been raised and ignored by the current Mayor who has refused to answer the serious questions put to him.
- In the absence of any sign that the Mayor intends to come clean about the conduct of his re-election campaign, it is incumbent upon Council officers to continue to investigate all allegations raised and to take all steps possible to identify the three women who falsely claimed to be members of THH staff. This includes investigating the conduct of officers in the Mayor's office, and the use of resources in the Mayor's Office.

This Council further notes:

- During the debate at the last Council meeting the Mayor was directly asked a number of questions which he refused consistently to answer:
 - Does the Mayor's re-election campaign pay people who canvass for him? If so, How is this funded?
 - Is the Mayor aware of people going round with his leaflets pretending to be from Tower Hamlets Homes? Has he investigated? Does he believe this may be a case of fraud?
 - Clearly the Mayor's campaign has already cost thousands of pounds so why has the Mayor only ever made one donation declaration to the Electoral Commission? How does he fund his campaign?
 - Why did the Mayor and independent councillors ban acknowledgement letters to save money and then send 4,322 of them at tax payer expense? Will they pay the money back?
 - Is there any link between the Mayor's funding to many new organisations in the borough and the Mayor's campaign?
 - Why is the Mayor remaining silent and refusing to answer these serious allegations from residents?

This Council further believes:

- The integrity of the upcoming elections is at risk if the Mayor continues to refuse to answer these important questions.
- That the lack of declarations to the Electoral Commission is incredibly concerning given that the Mayor has hosted a number of high profile events including:
 - A dinner at Mulberry School for over 2,000 women at Mulberry School
 - An Iftar meal for well over 1,000 people at WaterLily in August
 - A fundraising dinner at Canary Wharf
 - Numerous glossy printed leaflets distributed across the borough

This Council resolves:

- To further instruct officers to continue their investigation, with an expanded mandate to include attempts to identify the people potentially of impersonating Council or THH staff and to take appropriate action including referral to the police on the basis of false representation.
- Call on the Mayor and any independent councillors with any information, to identify the three canvassers who are at the centre of these allegations.
- To suspend standing orders to allocate a five minute slot after this item for the Mayor, and no other member, to personally address the questions set out above in the further notes section, and following that the proposer of this motion should then have a two minute right of reply.

The meeting ended at 11.02 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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

6.6 Question from Mr Steven Walker

Are tenants permitted to erect individual satellite dishes on the outside walls of council houses or flats?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

Thank you for your question Steve. The Council and Tower Hamlets Homes highlight their policy on this issue which can be found in the Tower Hamlets Homes Tenants Handbook.

To erect satellite dishes on their block, tenants and leaseholders of council houses or flats must obtain written consent from the landlord. In some instances planning permission may also be required.

8.4 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah

Is the lead member aware of the recent publicity about the levels of sugar content placed in many foods and drinks by the food industry unbeknownst to consumers contributing to life threatening obesity, cancer and other ill effects and could the lead member say what the council is doing to inform Tower Hamlets residents about the bad effects of high levels of sugar and about how they can realistically reduce sugar consumption?

Response by Councillor Abdul Asad, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

Thank you Councillor Fozol Miah for your question.

Healthy Eating, including reducing sugar consumption, is one of our public health priorities. That's why we commission a range of services and campaigns to ensure residents are fully informed.

A recent example is the Government's New Year Change4Life campaign launched in January 2014 and supported in Tower Hamlets with messages going into East End Life supported by community based promotional activities

Other examples include:

Cook4Life classes to support families in cooking healthier meals
Ensuring all school meals provided by the local authority meet nutritional guidelines

Oral Health promotion programmes, e.g. 'Healthy Smiles' emphasise the importance of cutting down on sugar and provide practical advice to children and families on how to do so. Child and adult weight management

programmes support people in improving their diets , including reducing sugar consumption, Health trainers, working across the Borough to support local people in living healthier lives, have been trained to promote healthy eating, including the effects of sugar on health and how to reduce sugar consumption.

I can reassure councillor Miah that I share his concern about the responsibility of the food industry in tackling the dangers of obesity.

8.6 Question from Councillor Gloria Thienel

Does the Mayor support my motion, which would see spitting and urinating in public places punishable by a fine, as is already the case in Waltham Forest?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you Councillor Thienel for your question. Our enforcement officers are issuing Fixed Penalty Notices, which carry a fine of £60.

Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEO's) are already taking proactive enforcement action for urination and spitting in public. There is no national criminal offence for spitting and urinating, so this is not a matter the police can address.

Over the last 6 months THEO's have been specially targeting areas where the Council receive most complaints and have issued over 80 Fixed Penalty Notice for anti-social behaviour with over 40 fines for waste/litter with an additional 12 people being reported for summons. I hope the Councillor will join me in congratulating our THEOs for their work and agree that their presence on our streets makes Tower Hamlets a safer, cleaner borough.

8.7 Question from Councillor Helal Abbas

Could the Council have an explanation of exactly how the Mayor's incredibly expensive taxpayer funded press machine issued an incendiary statement in his name regarding the Anjem Choudhury march on Brick Lane?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you Councillor Helal Abbas for your question. It is not true that conflicting statements were issued as neither welcomed the decision by a vocal minority to march down Brick Lane and hinder citizens from going about their business.

It is true that the initial response issued by our communications team was not cleared by the Mayor and should not have been sent out.

For the record the Mayor approved the following statement in the aftermath of the demonstration:-

“As part of our pledge to ‘No Place for Hate’, we oppose all groups that seek to impose their views on and bring division to our communities. Council staff worked with the police to ensure that the businesses, residents and visitors on Brick Lane were protected during the demonstration.”

8.8 Question from Councillor Harun Miah

Would the lead member join with me in welcoming Bangladesh hosting the T20 Cricket World Cup in a few weeks’ time with matches scheduled to take place in Sylhet, Chittagong and Dhaka and wishing the tournament every success despite the political turmoil which the Bangladesh government has plunged Bangladesh into and would the lead member say what the council will be doing to use the T20 World Cup to promote cricket amongst young people in Tower Hamlets across all communities?

Response by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture

Thank you your question. The Council will engage with the corporate communications team to capitalise on the great opportunity the T20 Cricket World Cup offers.

This will be done through promotional work before and during the start of the cricket season, engaging with residents, local clubs, schools and youth organisations to take advantage of the enhanced media coverage of the sport during the T20 World Cup.

8.9 Question from Councillor M.A. Mukit M.B.E.

How many residents in Weavers Ward are affected by the Mayor's trial to dim street lights in the Borough?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

None. There have been no changes to street lights in Weavers Ward.

The Government recommends that local authorities save costs by reducing the amount of energy burnt by streetlights and we are testing this on 50 streetlights to confirm whether the assertion that this does not produce a visible impact on street lighting is true. We are reviewing anti-social behaviour statistics and defect reports to see if there has been any impact on the local community.

Calling this “dimming” is incorrect. We are investing in brighter more energy efficient streetlights throughout the borough with 500 brighter white lights replacing amber lighting in this year alone. That is 5% of our stock. Where

this replaces dated amber lighting the net impact of reducing energy use may result in higher levels of lighting than currently experienced.

8.10 Question from Councillor Craig Aston

How many bin collections were missed in Tower Hamlets in the last municipal year, and what is the Mayor doing to address the persistent complaints of missed bin collections?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you Councillor Aston for your question. There were over two million bin collections between April and December 2013. Zero point one per cent of these were missed.

Of course, even one bin collection missed is one too many. And because we believe this, we even publish the performance data of missed collections on our website.

The council meets regularly with Veolia to address any issues and officers are out on the street responding to complaints, checking collections and performance.

8.11 Question from Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs

Could the Mayor update the council on what action has been taken since he signed the Time to Change pledge against mental health discrimination in April 2012, and reaffirmed the pledge with the Health and Wellbeing Board in October 2013?

Response by Councillor Abdul Asad, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

Thank you Councillor Whitelock Gibbs for your question. The Time to Change Campaign has been agreed as a key priority of the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board.

In October 2013 the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board developed a Time to Change Action plan and signed the Time to Change Pledge as a Partnership. This made it the first Health and Wellbeing Board to do so in the UK.

A work programme and action plan has been developed and agreed for the Time to Change Campaign for 2013/2014. Actions taken since April 2013 include:

The Council have reviewed and audited the organisation's ambitions, policies and interventions around mental health. As a result of this audit it was agreed that the Council will develop and implement a Mental Health and Wellbeing

Policy, sign up to the Mindful Employer Charter and undertake an independent 'Mental Health check' (which will be undertaken by Time to Change).

The Council wide Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy is being developed, reaffirming commitment through ongoing messages include: internal messages to staff, an article in East End Life about mental health for Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2013 and a double page spread on Mental Health and the Time to Change Campaign in East End Life for World Mental Health Day in October 2013.

8.12 Question from Councillor Kabir Ahmed

What are the Mayor's views about the findings of the Transforming Education for All report which stated that Tower Hamlets has some of the best urban schools in the world?

Response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Thank you for your question Councillor Kabir Ahmed. The Mayor is extremely proud of the findings documented in the research report. It makes clear the years of hard work, and the impressive outcomes achieved by our local young people, their parents and teachers as well as this administration and its officers.

Our success is rooted in working with and enabling the local community to shape and contribute to aspirational achievement, and presents a powerful alternative to academisation. The report is an example to not only the UK but the wider world in how to improve and excel across a whole locality in a systematic and effective way.

8.13 Question from Councillor Marc Francis

Who authorised the developer of the former Methodist Church on the corner of Armagh Road and Old Ford Road to obstruct hoardings across the footpath? Given that this has resulted in pedestrians including children and pensioners, being forced to walk in the road at this dangerous junction and why LBTH did not require the creation of a temporary walkway to ensure the safety of pedestrians before these hoardings were erected?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you Councillor Francis for your question. The hoarding around the construction site is for the safety and protection of residents, workers and members of the public.

Temporary walkways for construction sites are not usually required where a safe and convenient alternative already exists that can accommodate all

pedestrian needs including the needs of children and pensioners. The footways on the other side of the roads to the construction site are both convenient and safe. To ensure pedestrians are not forced into the road signs are located well before the site to notify pedestrians to use the other side of the road.

8.14 Question from Councillor Dr Emma Jones

Will the Mayor please confirm what steps are taken to ensure council leisure facilities are clean and safe for the public?

Response by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture

Thank you Councillor Dr. Emma Jones for your question. The Council's Partnership and Participation Team conducts quarterly site monitoring visits, as well as conducting sporadic visits to check the cleanliness of the centres, and to ensure that statutory obligations are being fulfilled.

Following inspections of the centres, if standards are deemed to be below that expected, the Council can issue a service improvement notification, with a specific time frame for any improvements to be made.

Furthermore monitoring of complaints and feedback from the public is undertaken that also informs spot check activity.

8.15 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun

What response does the Mayor have to George Osborne's suggestion that the Government should further cut welfare benefits from the poorest in our community? The Conservative Government would cut housing benefit from under 25 year olds & increase rent for social housing tenants if they are re-elected isn't the only choice to elect a Labour Government?

Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources

Thank you for your question Cllr Shiria Khatun. But I'm slightly confused by your question. The last time I looked – at the end of last year – there was confusion about whether the Labour Party were also considering scrapping Housing Benefit for the under 25s?!

So I only hope that Rachel Reeves MP, will stick to her words that they are not planning to cut housing benefit for under 25s and will revoke this policy if elected.

My response, and the Mayor's response, has been to consistently oppose this Government's disgraceful attacks on the poorest and most vulnerable in our community.

I have personally lobbied government ministers and countered this government's narrative through interviews and debates.

Moreover we've invested in financial support for those residents affected, we've:

- Kept our council rents as low as possible and campaigned against the national government's 80% affordable rent level.
- Set aside a provision of £2.2m to help the most vulnerable homeless households
- Invested in £3m funding to offset the Government's 10% reduction in Council Tax Benefit Subsidy thereby protecting approximately 25,000 working age households who would otherwise have to pay a Council Tax charge.

So my final response to your question is that I will continue to look to Labour to confirm that they will reverse the Government's welfare reforms

8.16 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani

Councillors launched a campaign based on the statement that the Mayor was unwilling to clean up the borough, only to find it was the cleanest it had ever been. Now they are claiming that rubbish miscollections are out of hand. Could the Lead Member tell us what the real figures are?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you Councillor Robbani for your question. Borough cleanliness is at an all-time high. We have a 99.89% record for collections on time and the borough is the cleanest it has ever been.

Last year, Keep Britain Tidy awarded us a prize for the tidiest borough and the latest survey undertaken by local residents showed that they feel the same, giving us a 97% score for being free of litter and refuse.

8.17 Question from Councillor Carli Harper-Penman

The Council's new Communications Protocol states that the Council "may not publish material that, having regard to the content and style, appears, in whole or in part, to be designed to affect public support for a political party." Can the Mayor therefore explain why over six months last year East End Life featured 320 quotes from the Mayor and independent councillors compared with only 15 from Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Respect councillors combined. Or why the paper also ran 164 images of the Mayor and his supporters as opposed to 26 featuring opposition councillors including the ceremonial speaker of the Council?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you Councillor Harper-Penman for your question. The council publicises council services and activity in line with the rules, guidance and statute of the day. In 2011 the current government issued a new Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. It explicitly allows politicians to be presented as the face of particular campaigns.

Given that the Mayor was elected by the people of the borough to serve them, it stands to reason that he and his cabinet will be quoted – every council and government department follows this process.

Previous administrations have used the council's communications channels to inform the public about services and we will not be prevented from doing so.

This council is doing what councils up and down the country are doing – namely informing residents about the services and policies of the administration they elected.

You have quoted selectively from the Communications Protocol. Specifically it says:- “East End Life has a clear set of editorial guidelines which have been reviewed legally, approved by Cabinet and been ‘approved’ by the then district auditor. It is appropriate to cover the actions of the Mayor and Cabinet as they, through the Mayor's executive powers, perform a policy making role for the authority. Cabinet members and those with specific responsibilities are often the ‘faces’ of the Council's many campaigns and services.

However such coverage needs to meet the seven principles listed in the Publicity Code, and in particular should be fair, balanced and objective. It would represent a breach of the code to include quotes from any member that politically criticises another member. Where balance is best served by obtaining an opposition leader quote, in line with the Publicity Code, inclusion may take place as long as the quote is locally focused and avoids personal criticism of other members.”

8.18 Question from Councillor David Snowdon

What is the Mayor doing to ensure that the Thames Path on the western side of the Isle of Dogs is made safe as soon as practical? It has been blocked by building work north of Cascades Tower, and residents have also contacted me regarding unfinished pavement repairs next to Sir John McDougal Gardens?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you Councillor Snowdon for your question. The private landowner is now in the process of carrying pavement repairs next to Sir John McDougal Gardens. Most of the Thames Path along the western wide of the Isle of Dogs is owned privately and just a small part, including Sir John McDougal Gardens, is owned by the council.

There are legal agreements with the private owners of land along the river edge to permit passage of the public along the Thames Path. These agreements usually formed part of the planning permission for the developments.

Responsibility for maintenance is usually covered in these agreements and it varies between the council or the landowner. The Council can require the owner to maintain it through enforcement of the planning agreement.

The Council is continuing to review all these agreements and take direct action with the private landowner where necessary.

8.19 Question from Councillor Judith Gardiner

What contingency planning has the Mayor and his officers undertaken in relation to the impact that the Tory Government's Plans to privatise the probation service and cut legal aid will have on the borough's ability to effectively deliver its crime and anti-social behaviour strategies?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you for your question Councillor Gardiner. The Mayor opposes the Tory Government's plans to privatise the probation service and cut legal aid.

The Mayor shares the view of Supreme Court President, Lord Neuberger who expressed that 'less legal aid means more unrepresented litigants'.

In relation to the probation service, the Mayor agrees with the assistant general secretary of National Association of Probation Officers Union, Harry Fletcher, who rightly claims that the government's decision is purely ideological, ill-thought out, chaotic and will compromise public protection. It is therefore essential for the Council to work hard to mitigate the effect of the government's decision.

The Council is one of only 4 London Local Authorities represented at the Ministry of Justice Local Authority Reference Group on Transforming Rehabilitation. Officers have sought to influence the development of the government plans on privatising the probation service, highlighting the uniqueness of Tower Hamlets in particular the partnership structure in Tower Hamlets.

In relation to legal aid cuts, officers have worked with Rights of Women as well as local solicitors firms to hold a number of training sessions and workshops regarding the effect of legal aid cuts in the domestic violence field.

Work and services provided by the Council for domestic violence cases will continue, including specialist victim support.

8.20 Question from Councillor Lutfa Begum

What are the Mayor's views about the impact on Tower Hamlets of George Osborne's decision to make a further £25 billion of cuts, half of which are to come from welfare spending?

Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources

Thank you for your question Councillor Lutfa Begum. The Mayor and I are very worried about the scale of the cuts being planned and especially their implications for the welfare state, which this government is hell-bent on eroding.

These cuts are part and parcel of a package that demonises the poor and people on welfare and blame them for an economic crisis.

But the facts are that only 3% of the welfare budget goes on the unemployment and only 0.7% of benefits are claimed fraudulently. That's about £1bn, compared to an [estimated £70bn of tax evasion](#).

For all their talk about benefit scroungers more than half the children and working-age adults in poverty today actually live in households where at least one person is working. These are the people being hit hardest by government cuts.

This economic crisis that continues to affect us is that fault of a rich elite of bankers, and the politicians who failed to regulate them, who gambled us all to the edge of oblivion.

These cuts will further contribute to a London that is becoming increasingly exclusive, increasingly unequal, increasingly divided, with an economy which has a small number of highly paid jobs, millions of badly paid jobs and little in the middle.

That's why they should be resisted.

8.21 Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam

Does the Mayor welcome John Biggs' lobbying efforts which helped to secure the TFL investment in Cambridge Heath and Bethnal Green train stations? Does he agree with me that this will have a significant and positive effect on residents in my ward?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you for your question Councillor Sirajul Islam. The Mayor notes Mr Biggs' attempt to take credit for this investment made by Boris Johnson.

The Mayor welcomes the improvements to the Cambridge Heath and Bethnal Green train stations. This will benefit both Tower Hamlets' residents and visitors to your ward.

The Mayor has long indicated his support for the proposal to connect lines between Liverpool Street and Chingford as part of the London Overground network.

The Mayor has supported the proposal in light of the benefits that has come from the investment of other London Overground services, such as the East London Line and North London Line. The improved service has been positive for the local economy.

8.22 Question from Councillor Tim Archer

What steps is the Mayor taking to combat speeding on Manchester Road?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you for your question Councillor Tim Archer. Enforcement of speeding traffic is a matter for the Police.

8.23 Question from Councillor Ann Jackson

Why has the Mayor, in his 'frontline saving' budget, cut vital mental health supported accommodation and older people's telecare; yet last month thought it right to agree over 150k of third sector support grants be 'moved' to spend on events such as Gala Dinners and concerts?

Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources

Thank you Councillor Ann Jackson for your question. There has been NO reduction in our mental health supported accommodation. Instead, we have been able to make savings WITHOUT reducing services.

And we have been able to do this because we have developed in-borough supported housing schemes as an alternative to expensive out of borough placements. This has enabled us to save money and reducing the need for vulnerable adults to move outside the borough.

In addition, we have negotiated better rates with external providers. This saving has been achieved whilst improving provision for our residents.

Secondly, I'm afraid you've misunderstood the nature of the telecare saving. We are actually increasing the provision of telecare – investing an extra £100,000 and helping more residents to live independently.

This means we can make savings by a reduced need for expensive care packages. Again not reducing care, but improving residents' independence and ability to live in their own homes.

Finally I'd like to remind Cllr Jackson, that these savings were all agreed by Full Council at last year's budget meeting.

On the issue of the events grant, this events fund has been going since 2009 and has simply been topped up by money by unallocated third sector grants, this was due to the huge demand for community events grants. This money would never have provided core council services like adult service care.

The Labour Party really need to stop scaremongering and spreading misinformation about council spending.

8.24 Question from Councillor Maium Miah

Following the opposition publication of inaccurate and alarmist statistics on crime last month, can the lead member tell us what the true figures are and how they compare to other London Boroughs?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you for your question Councillor Maium Miah. Looking at the actual figures it is surprising that the Labour Party seem to be spending so much of their election war chest on the so-called 'rising crime'.

In fact, crime has been reduced by 7.2% in the last 12 months.

This is lower than in neighbouring boroughs Hackney (13,649), Newham (15,853) and Southwark (16,579) than in Tower Hamlets (12,891).

8.25 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin

Can I ask the Mayor whether he has any further update on Watts Grove housing development scheme in Bromley by Bow?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

Thank you for your question Councillor Uddin. The Mayor is committed to continuing to explore options that bring forward funding or delivery models that will support the delivery of council homes. This review will include Watts Grove.

It is not possible at this stage to confirm any details of proposals for Watts Grove, funding or delivery timescales. The opportunities to bring forward homes on this site will continue to be kept under close review.

8.26 Question from Councillor Zara Davis

Could the Mayor outline the impact on the council of the recent case of East End Homes Ltd vs London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council, heard at the Chancery Court in December?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

Thank you Councillor Zara Davis for your question. There has been limited impact on the Council regarding this matter. The Council undertook the CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order) on behalf of East End Homes in order to assist the redevelopment on Holland estate; all the CPO and acquisition costs were borne by the Registered Provider.

8.27 Question from Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman

An independent review found last month that the reforms brought in under the last Labour Government and Council helped create some of the “best urban schools in the world.” Instead of taking credit for the work of those who came before him, could the Mayor now congratulate those Labour politicians, council officers and local school teachers who have made this transformation possible?

Response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Thank you for your question Councillor Motin Uz- Zaman. Of course the Mayor is proud to have played his small part in the massive team effort that has been the transformation of Tower Hamlets schools. As Lead Member for Education in 2002-3 and Leader of the Council 2008-10, as well as with initiatives like our university grants and reintroducing the EMA, he has certainly done his best to help.

However the real credit belongs to the pupils, teachers, parents and council officers who’ve made that change happen. The Mayor has always publicly thanked all these groups for their work, and acknowledges that he has built on the work of his predecessors, as you will find in the press releases and speeches that the Mayor has given since the report was published.

8.28 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan

Can the Mayor tell us if he has heard back from Boris Johnson after writing to him regarding cycling safety?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you Councillor Aminur Khan for your question. The Mayor was successful in engaging Boris Johnson, who has made a number of commitments to the borough since our letter.

Boris has promised to review safety along the length of the A11 and has committed to reviewing all existing Cycle Superhighways.

He also advised that his team are to ensure segregation of cycle lanes from general traffic along the length of the A11 with “pioneering” new designs for cycle separated junctions; and that they will be looking at Cycle Superhighway 3 on Cable Street which he has promised to consult the council on.

Further to this, he has mentioned the possibility of a parallel “Quietway” for less confident cyclists, and will confirm later in 2014 then producing a timetable for delivery.

I think we should wholly thank the Mayor for his achievement and clear commitment to the safety of cyclists in the borough.

8.29 Question from Councillor Anwar Khan

What’s the plan to reform Bow West road network?

Response by Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor

Thank you Councillor Anwar Khan for your question. A series of traffic surveys have been carried out to enable the existing traffic patterns to be modelled which will allow changes to the traffic management network to be tested.

This is in response to a number of concerns raised by residents about the level of traffic, congestion and rat running in the following areas in Bow:

Driffield Road area;
St Stephen’s Road
Old Ford Road – and its junction with Parnell Road
Fairfield Road
Tredegar Road
Antill Road
Cardigan Road

Such work would help to inform consultation with local residents to take place in future before any decisions were made.