

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2015

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

NOTE: AGENDA ORDER.

During the meeting the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Decision Sheet is 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.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Rajib Ahmed
- Councillor Craig Aston
- Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury
- Councillor Shiria Khatun
- Councillor Abjol Miah
- Councillor Harun Miah
- Councillor Md. Maium Miah
- Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah
- Councillor Gulam Robbani

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Abdul Asad declared an interest in Agenda Item 11.2 'Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy Outturn Report for 2014/15' as he had a pension with the Authority.

3. MINUTES

DECISION

That the unrestricted minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 July 2015 and the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 26 August 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly, subject to the following amendment in respect of Minute 4 of the 26 August 2015 meeting, 'Appointment of Chief Executive':-

'To add after the resolution:- "In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.6, the following Councillors each asked that it be recorded that they had abstained from voting on the above resolution on the basis that the Council had received, shortly before the meeting, sensitive late information as set out in the supplementary report with potential reputational implications which the Members did not feel they had time to consider fully:-

Councillor Suluk Ahmed
Councillor Ohid Ahmed
Councillor Shah Alam
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury
Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Md. Maium Miah
Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Gulam Robbani'

(**Action by:** John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

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

There were no announcements.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition regarding the deletion and retention of the African Families Service.

Representatives of the petitioners addressed the meeting in support of the petition, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Rachael Saunders, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services, then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION

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

(**Action by:** Debbie Jones, Interim Director, Children's Services)

5.2 Petition to remove double yellow lines in Blackwall Way.

Mr Salman Ahmed addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION

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

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

5.3 Petition regarding Yates House

Ms Kate Cook addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance, then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

DECISION

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

(Action by: Aman Dalvi, Corporate Director, Development and Renewal)

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 Mayor or relevant Executive Member:-

- 6.1 Question from Ms Marie Larvin on behalf of Tower Hamlets Fairtrade Network requesting an urgent review of procurement policies to maximise the range of fairly traded products used.
- 6.2 Question from Mr Md Sumsul Talukder on private renting in Tower Hamlets and the Council's plans in this area.
- 6.4 Question from Mr Mohammed Abdur-Rahman about cleaning of dog litter in Tower Hamlets.
- 6.8 Question from Mr Abu Talha Chowdhury regarding the Horwood Estate Bangla School and recent grant aid decisions.
- 6.9 Question from Mr Abu Hussain on behalf of Thames Bengali Association regarding the provision of support for organisations following the withdrawal of grant aid funding.
- 6.10 Question from Mr Abdirashid Gulaid regarding progress with the Time to Change Pledge on mental health stigma and discrimination.

Question 6.3, 6.5 and 6.6 were not put due to the absence of the questioners. Questions 6.7 had been withdrawn from the agenda. 6.11-12 were not put due to lack of time. Written responses would be provided to these questions.

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services – to arrange written responses)

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented his report to the Council. The Leaders of the other political groups then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

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 Mayor or relevant Executive Member or Committee Chair:-

- 8.1 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar on the Mayor's work around the opening of the Jack the Ripper 'Museum' and the planning permission process.
- 8.3 Question from Councillor Amina Ali to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asking for an update on the committee's Transparency Commission and the measures to involve all Councillors in the initiative. (No supplementary question was put)
- 8.4 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman regarding East End Life.
- 8.5 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell about efforts to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Tower Hamlets.
- 8.6 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman on Council-managed parks and the inspection regime.
- 8.7 Question from Councillor Marc Francis regarding food waste recycling in the Borough.
- 8.8 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood requesting an update on the status of the South Quay Masterplan
- 8.9 Question from Candida Ronald regarding a fair and transparent grants process.
- 8.10 Question from Councillor Shahed Ali regarding the allocation of office accommodation to the political groups.

Question 8.2 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. The remaining questions 8.11 - 8.16 were not put due to a lack of time. Written responses would be provided to the questions.

(**Action by:** John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services – to arrange written responses)

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

9.1 Annual Report to the Council by the Independent Person

The Council considered the Annual Report for 2014/15 of the Independent Person appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

The recommendations in the report were out to the vote and were **agreed**.

DECISION

That the report be noted

(**Action by:** John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

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

There was no business to transact under this agenda item.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Review of proportionality and allocation of places on committees

The Council considered the report of the Service Head, Democratic Services, setting out the position regarding proportionality and the allocation of Committee places following a change in the political composition of the Council.

The recommendations set out in the report were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

DECISION

1. That the review of proportionality as at section 3 of the report be noted and the allocation of seats on committees and panels be agreed for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2015/16 as set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report.

2. That Members and deputies be appointed to serve on those committees and panels in accordance with nominations from the political groups to be notified to the Service Head, Democratic Services.

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

11.2 Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy Outturn Report for 2014/15

The Council considered the annual report of the Corporate Director, Resources on the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for the financial year 2014/15.

The recommendations in the report were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

DECISION

That the Council note:

1. The Treasury Management activities and performance against targets for the twelve months to 31 March 2015.
2. The Pension Fund investments balance (set out in section 3.8.2 of the report)
3. The Council's investments as at 31 March 2015 (as in Appendix 1 of the report)
4. The Council's investments with part nationalised banks as at 31 March 2015 (set out in section 3.21.9 of the report)
5. The Prudential indicators outturn for 2014/15 (set out in Appendix 2 of the report).

(Action by: Zena Cook, Corporate Director, Resources)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.5 Motion regarding the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge

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

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

DECISION

This Council notes:

1. 1 in 5 people has a mental health condition at any one time.
2. The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020.
3. Mental ill health has an economic and social cost of £105 billion each year in England alone.
4. People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.
5. There is often a circular relationship between mental health and issues such as housing, overcrowding, employment, family problems or debt.
6. The Local Authority Mental Health Challenge was set up by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds, to support councils to take a proactive approach to improving mental health in local communities.

This Council further notes:

1. The local Mental Health Strategy states that "Tower Hamlets has amongst the highest levels of mental health need in England."
2. The strategic plan, recently revised under the current Mayor, includes a strategic priority to "reduce health inequalities and promote mental and physical wellbeing", including a specific action to "promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the council and community".
3. Full Council previously passed a motion on 22 Jan 2014, agreeing to sign up to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge and commit to its 10 actions, but the previous Mayor and Cabinet failed to take this forward.

This Council believes:

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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 Council resolves:

To publicly sign the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge.

To support implementation of the Challenge and its commitments through an action plan, which integrates with and builds on the council's strategic plan and the Health and Wellbeing Board's Mental Health Strategy.

We commit to the 10 pledges that form the Mental Health Challenge:

1. Appoint an elected member as 'mental health champion' across the Council
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, for example through our joint health and wellbeing strategy
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, the national programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination.

We further commit to support councillors and staff to promote positive mental health and support people with mental health problems:

11. Introduce mental health awareness training for all elected members and promote the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge guide for councillors, to ensure we can support our constituents and know the appropriate referral routes.
12. Introduce training for frontline staff, such as housing and lettings teams, so they can identify, signpost and support people with mental

health needs appropriately, including knowing the right referral routes to ensure people get timely help.

(Action by: Luke Adams, Interim Director Adult Services and Service Head Adult Commissioning)

Motion 12.2 had been withdrawn. Motions 12.1, 12.3 – 12.4 and 12.6 – 12.9 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 motion to be debated without notice:

13.1 Motion regarding the Refugee Crisis in Europe

Mayor John Biggs **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, the motion as **tabled**.

Councillor Oliur Rahman **moved** an amendment to insert in the second sentence of the resolutions 'signed by all three Group Leaders if possible' and to insert an additional resolution 'To work with charity groups and organisations across Tower Hamlets and London, particularly, consulting and working together with the Refugee Council and Refugee Task Force that Jeremy Corbyn has asked Yvette Cooper to lead on'.

Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Sirajul Islam indicated that they accepted the amendment, and altered their motion accordingly.

Councillor Andrew Wood **moved**, and Councillor Chris Chapman **seconded** an amendment to delete the words 'but isn't enough' in the second point under 'This Council believes'. Following debate, this amendment was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

Following further debate the substantive motion as altered to include the amendment moved by Councillor Oliur Rahman was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes:

1. The situations in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Eritrea have created a major humanitarian crisis. 4 million Syrians have left their homes and crossed the border.
2. UN figures show a third of a million people have attempted to cross the Mediterranean in the last eight months.
3. The government commitment that Britain will take 20,000 refugees over the next five years.

4. The helpful and supportive representations made by political groups on this council.
5. The petition, signed by over 430,000 people, calling for an increase in support for refugees.
6. That the crisis is a fast-moving situation with frequent developments.

This Council believes:

1. That Britain and other countries have a moral duty and a responsibility to provide a sanctuary for those who are forced to flee their homes.
2. That the government's commitment to take 20,000 refugees is a start, but isn't enough.
3. That local government has a part to play in the response to this crisis, but that there must be leadership from central government to coordinate and manage the UK's response.
4. That the government must provide sufficient resources to local authorities to ensure that we can make adequate provision for refugees and asylum seekers without adversely affecting services for our residents.
5. That our priority will always be local people, but we also have a moral duty to play our own small part as a borough, with financial support from the Government.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Mayor to explore all possible options with an aim to provide support for a small number of refugee families during this crisis.
2. To call on the Mayor to write to the Prime Minister, signed by all Group Leaders if possible, expressing the importance of leadership from central government and requesting that sufficient resources are made available to local authorities to enable us to make adequate provision for refugees and asylum seekers whilst ensuring that we meet our primary obligation to local residents.
3. To request that the Mayor updates the council on any developments and additional details with regard to the council's response to the crisis.
4. To work with charity groups and organisations across Tower Hamlets and London, particularly consulting and working together with Refugee Council and Refugee Task Force that Jeremy Corbyn has asked Yvette Cooper to lead on.

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Head of Paid Service)

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

No motion to exclude the press and public was passed.

15. EXEMPT MOTIONS

There was no business to transact under this agenda item.

The meeting ended at 10.32 p.m.