

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES 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**

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs	Councillor Peter Golds
Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Shafiqul Haque
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Councillor Clare Harrisson
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Danny Hassell
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Mahbub Alam	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Shah Alam	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Rachel Blake	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Chris Chapman	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Dave Chesterton	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Andrew Cregan	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Julia Dockerill	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Andrew Wood
Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs	

THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 7.32 P.M.

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor M. A. Mukit, MBE in the Chair

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 the business was taken in at the meeting was as follows:

- Item 1 - Apologies for absence.
- Item 2 – Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
- Item 13.1 – Urgent Motion regarding Refugee Crisis in Europe
- Item 3 – Minutes.
- Item 4 – Announcements.
- Items 5.1- 5.3 – Petitions
- Item 6 – Public Questions.
- Item 7 – Mayor’s Report.

- Item 8 – Members Questions. (8.1 – 8.5)
- Item 12.5 - Motion regarding the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge
- Item 8 – Members Questions. (8.6 – 8.10)
- Item 9.1 – Annual Report to the Council by the Independent Person
- Item 11.1 - Review of proportionality and allocation of places on the committees.
- Item 11.2 - Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy Outturn Report for 2014/15

In opening the meeting, the Speaker referred with great sadness to an incident that had taken place the previous day in the Brick Lane area, in which a resident of the borough was attacked and suffered fatal injuries. On behalf of the Council, the Speaker sent his condolences to the bereaved family. At the Speaker's invitation, the Council stood to observe a minute's silence in memory of the deceased.

The Speaker also thanked the Deputy Speaker, Councillor Rajib Ahmed for chairing the extraordinary Council meeting held during August whilst the Speaker was away, at which a new Chief Executive, Will Tuckley was appointed. The Council looked forward to welcoming Mr Tuckley to their future meetings. The Speaker also thanked Mr Halsey for his work during his appointment as Head of Paid Service.

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.

Procedural Motion

Mayor John Biggs **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.5, Rule 13.1 be

suspended to enable an urgent motion regarding the 'Refugee Crisis in Europe' to be considered". The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

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

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. She offered to

meet with the organisation to gain a better understanding of their work and situation and to discuss the future of their service.

RESOLVED

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

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 on behalf of Councillor Ayas Miah (Cabinet Member for Environment), as he considered that the petition raised strategic issues. Mayor Biggs stated that he was sympathetic to the request to remove the double yellow lines, introduced for healthy and safety reasons by the Council following incidents involving construction traffic. He advised that on completion of the work, the Council would look to pursue this option.

The Mayor also reported that he would be reviewing the Council's parking policy taking in account the pressures from new developments and the need to minimise car use, where appropriate, amongst other matters. He expressed a wish to work with all parties across the political spectrum on this work.

RESOLVED

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

5.3 Petition for 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. Referring to the Decent Homes Programme, he explained that the works to Yates House were due to be delivered in 2015/16 and that, as part of the consultation with the leaseholders, the Tower Hamlets Homes Board had established a steering group with interested residents to agree the scope of works, the delivery programme and a start date. The consultation was expected to be completed in November 2015. He was happy to meet with residents of the housing block to discuss the plans.

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 Council was informed that public question 6.7 had been withdrawn before the meeting.

The following questions and in each case 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:

[Note from the Clerk. The Council were advised of a misprint in the second line of part 2 of the question as printed in the agenda, where 'January 2015' should read 'January 2016.']

Will the Mayor and Councillors support an urgent review and report back on procurement policies to ensure that:

1. Contracts for all council catering facilities maximise the ranges of fairly traded products stocked at the earliest opportunity. (Given that seven years after Tower Hamlets became a Fairtrade Town, no Fairtrade certified products have been stocked in cafes/canteens in: Ideas Stores in Bow and Whitechapel; the Brady Centre; the Shadwell Centre; and vending machines in many council offices and Leisure centres)
2. Over 60 of our local school canteens continue being supplied with Fairtrade bananas and fruit juices, under the joint contract due to be re-let in January 2016. (Given that many local students, parents and teachers have signed petitions asking for this, and for other products to be supplied if possible in future, and given that Tower Hamlets Contract Services can make requests of the lead borough, currently Havering).'

Response by Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources

Thank you. It is the case that the Borough has been a fairtrade Borough for really quite some time and as you say there are a number of points in which progress has been made, in schools and other locations but clearly there are still gaps and my understanding is that the contract that is talked about is one that starts early next year. The aim is to include ethically sourced products in that.

The Council's general procurement policy is one which does feature that, that's an important imperative within it. But I think that there is a need and there will be benefit from me sitting down with the Tower Hamlets fairtrade network in order to discuss this in quite a lot more detail than it's possible to do so in a simple exchange of questions and answers in the Council Chamber. So I think progress has been made but clearly there are things that still need to be done. I'd be very happy to meet you and colleagues to have a much more detailed conversation about it than we're going to be able to have now.

Supplementary question from Ms Marie Larvin

Well my supplementary question was going to be who within the Council might we be able to meet to pursue this forward because there has been a lack of progress and we would welcome that opportunity for further collaboration. So if you are the person that we will liaise with, we will take you up on that offer.

Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources' response to the supplementary question

No I think we are going in the same direction really and I would just like to hand over my business card.

6.2 Question from Mr Md Sumsul Talukder:

Private Renting in Tower Hamlets is become sky high! There is no such standard guideline for Private Landlord to rent a property or Rent limit for the property. So every working class living in the Tower Hamlets borough are seriously affected & struggling to pay rent including me. Many of us facing Eviction on a daily basis in some point, so it's an important issue to think about.

1. Does council has any plan to introduce a standard policy guideline for Private Landlords to control the uncontrolled property Rent of the borough?
2. How importantly you will consider the matter and when it can be implemented to protect working class of the borough?

Council May DO;

1. Introduce landlord Registration scheme.
2. Every landlords has to register their property with council and Must get an unique registration no to put property on Rent advert
3. Council official conduct survey of every individual property and set up a limit rent for the property. Based on;
- Area, mortgage amount, property standard, age of property, size, how many bed rooms, local facilities, furnished/unfurnished etc.
4. Also Council may generate revenue from property registration & renewal scheme

So let's have all your thoughtful opinions and possible outcome in this regards. It can be a great initiative to help the local community.

Response by Councillor Sirajul Islam, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance

Thank you Mr Speaker, thank you Mr Talukder. The Mayor has delegated this response to me. So the Council recognises the high demand for private rented sector properties in the Borough and the rent increases that have occurred which makes the vast majority of such properties unaffordable for those residents on low or average incomes. At present there is no regulation of private rents. These can be set by landlords in response to market conditions. Neither central government nor the GLA supports the introduction of rent controls so the Council is not in a position to influence private rent levels.

The Housing Act 2004 gives the Council the power to introduce a housing license scheme for privately rented properties within designated areas in order to improve standards of management in the private rented sector and reduce anti-social behaviour. A License Scheme will enable the Council to impose a legal requirement in the designated area on all landlords to register, apply for licence for each property they rent out and comply with specific licence conditions thus giving the Council more power to tackle responsible lettings of property. However, licensing does not extend to rent setting.

A public consultation on the Council proposal has recently finished and the report will come to Cabinet on draft proposal for a scheme in Autumn/Winter this year. In addition, the Council is working with both Housing Association and developers on the development of bespoke new private rented schemes which will provide better quality and more responsive management and more certainty of tenancy length as part of a marketing housing offer to new developments.

Supplementary question from Mr Md Sumsul Talukder

Yes thank you Mr Mayor. We know that in the 1977 Rent Act most private sector tenants were eligible for fair rents. Later due to Margaret Thatcher's legacy this changed.

So I'd like to thank our previous housing Cabinet Member, Councillor Rabina Khan who has committed and campaigned for the private rent management sector but I would like to ask the question to the Mayor will you take any initiative to do the campaigning to change the legislation for the fairer rent to protect the residents of the Tower Hamlets.

Councillor Sirajul Islam Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Performance's response to the supplementary question

Thank you very much. There is no campaign at present. As I said in my response, it is the Government and the GLA that needs to establish rent setting proposals. If they do so the Council will comply. At the moment, as a Local Authority we cannot do that. However, a Landlord Licence Scheme will ensure that the landlords in this borough will comply with the licence

agreements and will provide a good quality private sector housing to residents of this borough.

6.4 Question from Mr Mohammed Abdur-Rahman:

What action is the Council taking to deal with and clean dog litter on the streets of Tower Hamlets?

Response by Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you Mr Abdur-Rahman for your question. Dog litter and the cleaning of it from the street is part of the scheduled cleansing regime by the street sweeper. In addition, where there is a report or complaint by residents or reports of an affected area, then an instruction is issued to the street cleansing contractor to clear it up. A street care officer within the Clean Green and Highways Team, a service division of the CLC Department, monitor the cleansing regime in the area identified as the hot spots for dog fouling.

The Council's enforcement team, enforcement officers, the THEOS and the Animal Warden carry out the regular prevention, education and enforcement operation across the Borough to target irresponsible dog ownership and control of dogs including fouling.

The Council is also looking at implementing the new power under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that allow for whole areas to have in place for the control of dogs and fouling, public spaces protection order and the issuing of the public communities protection notice that carries a penalty of £100. Any breach of this is considered a criminal offence.

Supplementary question from Mr Mohammed Abdur-Rahman:

Would the Council consider following in the footsteps of Barking and Dagenham Council and DNA-ing dogs and that would probably be useful perhaps and sending a ticket through the post.

Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment's response to the supplementary question

Mr Rahman we have invested an extra £200,000 for cleansing our streets and this will improve the way in which we tackle the dog fouling issue. However it must be noted that each and every dog owner must take some responsibility for clearing up their dog's mess and take pride in where they live.

6.8 Question from Mr Abu Talha Chowdhury:

On 29th July the Commissioners, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, took formal decisions on the Main Stream Grants Programme. Horwood Estate Bangla School has received funding since the 1980s to run Mother

Tongue classes and supplementary school. Would the Mayor make a statement on how he expects this group to continue to provide this service?

Response by Councillor Rachael Saunders, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services

Thank you and thank you for bringing this question. I think it's really important that this issue is raised at this Council meeting. I'm told that the Council funds 1520 tutor hours per year through the Council's Community Language Service so in as much as we can make a contribution to the Community Language Service on that estate, we are doing, and that's a really important resource.

The decision on the Main Stream Grant Funding, the decisions were made by the Commissioners. Myself and a number of my Labour Group colleagues and Councillor Golds attended the Commissioners' decision making meeting and we did, on this side, absolutely everything we could to make representations on behalf of a whole number of organisations, who I very much regret, lost their funding.

Unfortunately those representations were unsuccessful because the Commissioners made a decision to stick entirely with the recommendations that had been made to them by officers.

It was amazing to me that when the previous Mayor was in post, no member of his Group ever turned up to any Commissioner meeting and indeed no representative from any of the Group opposite were at that meeting of the Commissioners' decision making meeting given it was the only the opportunity we had.

Actually local people aren't allowed to speak at those meetings, so it's our responsibility as Councillors to make local people's voice heard. We did our best and it's an obvious source of regret that our representations weren't successful.

The way to solve this is to remove the Commissioners from the Council, to move on from the regime that we're in, and we're doing everything we can to achieve that.

We're working to establish a proper grants process that will meet external scrutiny, we're devising a new third sector strategy and we're doing everything we can to move on from the shame, frankly, and the real tragedy of the fact that we as a democratically elected administration aren't able to control grant funding. So we're doing everything we can to strengthen this Council's processes, procedures and move on.

Supplementary question from Mr Abu Talha Chowdhury

I understand to mitigate the losses and to support these organisations that lost funding an emergency funding pot was arranged. In terms of the process and when they return or reply back to you, would you be able to shed some light on this?

Councillor Rachael Saunders, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services' response to the supplementary question

So emergency funding is also within the control of the Commissioners. I'm happy to ask the Corporate Director to write to you with details of how to apply for that emergency funding. But we are in a situation where all grant funding is in the control of the Commissioners.

6.9 Question from Mr Abu Hussain on behalf of Thames Bengali Association

On 29th July the Commissioners, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, took formal decisions on the Main Stream Grants (MSG) Programme. This has left 237 organisations without Council funding and having to consider cutting back or even stopping their services. Although the Council has no control over how the MSG budget is spent, the Mayor controls other funds, including contingency funding. Thames Bengali Association has scored 84 and 80 for two MSG grant applications but they are not recommended for funding. The children will return after summer holiday but abrupt funding decision force us to stop our services after 18 years of service.

Will he make officers available to help organisations which have not been funded under the MSG programme find a way of surviving? This could include assistance in finding alternative premises or in awarding some emergency funding so they can survive.

Response by Councillor Rachael Saunders, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services

It's unfortunately a similar answer and it's a desperately sad situation to be in, to be able to frankly offer very little help to organisations with a really impressive and respectable track record in our Borough that I have enormous respect for. There is very little we can do in terms of grant funding. The Commissioners did, and I supported their decision to, continue to fund the CVS so they ought to be a source of help and advice. If there is any other help and advice that we can give, then of course we will, but you have been mistaken or misinformed in your hope that the Mayor was able to give emergency funding. It's the Commissioners that decide on the emergency funding.

Supplementary question from Mr Abu Hussain

We have already applied for this emergency funding and haven't yet been informed of the Council's decision. How does the new leadership intend to respond to the threat to our organisation and to so many others which will be forced to close to the detriment to our community?

Councillor Rachael Saunders, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services' response to the supplementary question

If you haven't heard about a decision, that is unacceptable and I will do all I can to make representations to the Commissioners to make sure that they at least give you a reply. That's the very least that should happen for you. In terms of what we can do, this Council isn't able to give any grant of any kind to anybody without the Commissioners' agreement. The CVS is there to help and support, if there are ways in which we can help and support any other bids or anything else that we can practically do to support in-kind terms do, then we are happy to but were are not in the situation where we as Councillors are able to give grants without the Commissioners' agreement.

6.10 Question from Mr Abdirashid Gulaid:

Could the Lead Member for Health and Adult Services update us on what actions the Council and partners have taken since signing the Time to Change pledge on ending mental health stigma and discrimination?

Response by Councillor Amy Whitelock-Gibbs, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services

Thank you Abdi for this really important question and I'm looking forward to working with you and the wider mental health sector in my new role. This is a really crucial question given the scale of mental health problems that we know we face in the Borough and given the level of stigma and discrimination that many people with mental health problems still suffer from.

As you will know and many will know in the Chamber, the time to change pledge was signed by the Council and all of the Health and Wellbeing Board Members back in October 2013, a decision that this group welcomed. Since that time a number of actions have taken place. The Council has reviewed its HR policies and implemented or developed a Health and Wellbeing Strategy for our internal council staff. We have implemented a programme of activities to promote mental wellbeing which range from yoga and counselling through to gym membership and training and things like resilience and time management to support our own staff. We have also done a programme of awareness-raising on mental health and crucially stigma reduction is a really key priority within the mental health strategy but also within some of the tenders that are currently underway from the Council.

So just to give one example as I know time is tight, Public Health are currently procuring mental wellbeing and stigma reduction pilot which looks at stigma reduction around 4 high risk groups including younger people aged 16-24, men who are high risk, BME groups and lesbian gay and bisexual groups and transgender groups, all of whom face often the double discrimination of their mental health problems and other issues so we've done those things. However I do recognise the Council needs to do more and 2013 was two years ago. There's a motion later on the agenda which I hope we'll get to

which commits the Council to some other action around mental health stigma as well as other issues if its passed and I personally am committed to renewed commitment around this issue and I know the Mayor is too.

Supplementary question from Mr Abdirashid Gulaid

I think the Lead Councillor has answered my question in regards to working in partnership with Third Sector organisations. But one thing would be to have joined up thinking with the East London Foundation Trust as well and other partners particularly registered social landlords and to make sure that one of the biggest issues that we have in the Borough is that access to mental health is stopped by stigma and to tackle that head on would be a prevention measure.

Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services' response to the supplementary question

Thanks Abdi I completely share that view about the need to work across the full range of the council services but also with other partners. So one thing that Officers have been thinking about is around world mental health day how we can give more public profile to this issue including talking to employers again about signing up to the time to change pledge and getting more people to sign up and to support their staff but also its interesting that you raised housing, as at the next Health and Wellbeing Board at the end of September, we'll be looking at integration of health and a range of other things and housing will be on that agenda and I'll be certain to raise the issue of mental health there and I look forward to working with you in future to take this forward.

Question 6.3, 6.5 and 6.6 were not put due to the absence of the questioner. Questions 6.7 had been withdrawn from the agenda. Questions 6.11 and 6.12 were not put due to lack of time. The Service Head, Democratic Services stated that written responses would be provided to the questions. (Note: The written responses are included in Appendix 'A' to these minutes.)

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council, referring to his written report circulated at the meeting and summarising key events, engagements and meetings over the past period.

When the Mayor had completed his report, at the invitation of the Speaker 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

Can the Mayor provide an update on his work surrounding the opening of the Jack the Ripper 'Museum' – and in particular outline any efforts to address the deplorable way planning permission was sought?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

I am grateful for this question. Of course we have mentioned the matter and Councillor Akhtar will understand that the response to this has to be cautious because there are two unresolved planning matters in relation to the museum premises so I can't in anyway be seen to be prejudicing or predetermining those.

The planning permission was granted on 1st October 2014 under delegated powers and among the documents submitted was a supporting document indicating that the vision for the proposed museum was to create displays that celebrate and tell the story of the women of the East End and their historic cultural and future contributions. It was on this basis that there were no objections received and the permission was granted.

The Council was made aware after the event that the building was actually being opened as a Jack the Ripper Museum and I think that most people would find that quite disgraceful. The fact in terms of planning law is that once it has opened as a museum, you can open a museum for tiddly winks and turn it into one for dinosaurs. Once it's a museum it's a museum in planning terms. But the question is whether there is other action we can take and I have carried out a number of actions that we can perhaps come to later if there is a thoughtful supplementary question about this.

Supplementary question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar

What representations has the Mayor received about this issue and what have you done in light of those representations?

Mayor John Biggs' response to the supplementary question

I am grateful for this question even if that was a planted supplementary question. I think that it is very important that this matter is discussed in the Council Chamber because it is a grave concern to many people obviously women but obviously also all thoughtful people in our Borough who I think will be offended by this thing happening.

I have had a large number of letters and I am sure other Members have as well. I have received emails and a deputation from 38 Degrees that carried a

petition of over 7000 signatures. There has been some detailed research by members of the public looking into this and suggesting to us ways in which the planning regime might have been broken.

I have written to the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to ask them whether they might want to think about whether something that was permitted as one thing can be turned into another without there being any sanction or come back in terms of the planning or other regimes. We are looking at whether the Museum could be in breach of planning permissions. We are happy to meet with other members of the public. I would emphasise that any protest against this Museum we would expect to be lawful, peaceful, respectful and dignified but we need to be quite emphatic in my opinion as a citizen of this Borough in expressing our disapproval of what has happened here.

Finally we have instructed Counsel to look at whether the way in which the permission was sought could provide grounds for enforcement activity. Finally I should say that I have been written to by the owner of the museum threatening legal action against me and others. I wouldn't say that I would be very happy to face legal action but I think that this is a very important matter of principle and that people in the Borough should be courageous in expressing their disapproval. We want to see lawful activity we want to see respectful activity in our Borough and we welcome that, but this is causing an affront to many, many people and I want it by some means or another to cease to operate.

8.3 Question from Councillor Amina Ali to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Can the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee update the Council on the committee's Transparency Commission and how it is ensuring that it engages with all councillors, across all parties?

Response by Councillor John Pierce, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thank you for this important question Councillor Ali. The last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting was held on 7 September. At this session we had the Mayor John Biggs come along to present his proposals on how he can make his decision making and his Cabinet more open transparent and accountable and I thank him for that. We also had Officers who brought forward proposals on s106 funding, CIL governance and the democratic structures and also the Council's new engagement strategy and we had a representative from the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

Over the next month I want to do a survey of all Councillors to enable them to engage and give their views into the process that we are taking forward. We have already had some excellent ideas from Members in the opposite parties. Councillor Alam has brought forward proposals and suggestions for engaging with Trade Unions and they will present to the next meeting. Councillor Golds

is going to bring forward proposals on how to enhance the role of Councillors in our community.

(No supplementary question was put)

8.4 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman

Will the Mayor inform the council as to the progress of his pledge to abolish East End Life, which continues to be published weekly?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

I think that I have referred to this matter twice, once tangentially when I said there are some decisions that seem to take time to work their way through the Council and the other where I said in my Mayor's report, I have instructed that the frequency be reduced and that in parallel with that, a review of our communications strategy be urgently carried out so that we can find a way in which we will be compliant with the regulations set by government and our duty and need to communicate with members of the public of Tower Hamlets in an effective, frequent and reasoned way.

Perhaps I could also mention that I have in the meantime suggested that the editorial stance of the newspaper could be more liberal with a small 'l' in the sense of allowing different voices to be expressed in it and I have expressed a view that there should be a lower Biggs count than perhaps historical precedence might have suggested would have been the case with the previous Mayor with respect to him.

It is very tempting if you have a newspaper to put your picture in it and quotes from you every week but it's important that the civic leader is represented in the media. But I want it to be, if it does continue to exist in the time being, a more pluralistic and informative newspaper. Although it is actually very good in many respects. There are excellent staff that help produce it.

Supplementary question from Councillor Chris Chapman

I thank the Mayor for his answer. I have had numerous emails from residents suggesting a supplementary question and I have decided to go with Doris from the Isle of Dogs. Doris asks does the Mayor feel that he is going far enough with these alterations bearing in mind his pre - election statement 'I commit to you that if elected I will scrap East End Life and replace it with something more useful and not full of propaganda'.

Doris feels that should you wish to preserve a paper that has become synonymous with the mismanagement of public money that we saw under the now disgraced former Mayor of this Borough that it would do little to further you position at the forefront of a new era of integrity and transparency. It cannot be right that tax payers' money should be used and the sum is £1.5 million to fund this paper and of course as you quite rightly identified during the campaign, it is a gross misuse of public money. Doris would like to know

will you follow through with your pledge and demonstrate that unlike your predecessor you wish limited resources to be channelled into improving the wellbeing of our residents rather than shameless self advancement.

Mayor John Biggs' response to the supplementary question

Well I'm not exactly noted for my shameless self advancement so I would like to think that it is taken as read that I am not going to use the Council's resources to shamelessly self advance myself. I think I have probably got as far as I am going to get anyway so no more self advancement on the horizon. That's my sense of humour by the way that takes a bit of getting used to, so I am constantly advised.

Doris is a big fan and I am pleased with that. She will obviously sense the irony that I have tried to introduce into the columns of East End Life and as a sensitive soul I am sure she spots it all the time. But in answer to your question, yes the review will have to lead to the ending of East End Life as we know it. Thank you.

8.5 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell

What is the Council doing to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in our borough?

Response by Councillor Amy Whitelock-Gibbs, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services

Thank you Councillor Hassell. As people in the Chamber will know I love talking about mental health it's a very personal passion of mine so it's quite a treat to talk about it twice in one evening. But seriously this is a really crucial issue around children's mental health. We know in regard to children in Tower Hamlets there are lots of high risk factors for them experiencing mental health problems or poor mental health. We also know that half of people who have a mental health problem as an adult experience those symptoms before the age of 14.

So it's crucial that we act early and that's why the Council's mental health strategy has children and young people's mental health at its heart and with consultancy from Young Minds, a charity, we have done a whole system review of how we support children and young people across the Council, NHS, education, voluntary sector and working with service user representatives. That's included co-producing some outcomes with service users and parents to develop a new contract and partnership model for these services.

This is a priority for public health but also for the NHS and at the Health and Wellbeing Board we have discussed the need to focus on CAMS, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services that are provided by the NHS. The government, people may know, has invested more money in that recently because of the gross underinvestment in this service. It really has been the

Cinderella service of mental health which is in itself known as very poorly serviced historically under the last government, something welcomed that they have put extra money in. We reckon we will get something around £520,000 in Tower Hamlets and the plan is being developed at the moment and needs to be approved but looks at focusing on things like eating disorders, the role of psychological therapies and improving perinatal mental health services.

Supplementary question from Councillor Danny Hassell

Thanks very much for that comprehensive reply. I just wonder whether you also could also commit to the Council looking into what more could be done specifically working with schools to promote the emotional resilience of children in our Borough.

Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services' response to the supplementary question

Thanks Councillor Hassell and I am sorry that I am talking with my back to you. Councillor Saunders who leads for Education and Schools and I met officers just last week about children's public health in general and we were pleased to learn about two programmes about mental health within schools - one around school nursing delivered by Compass Wellbeing who are a primary health psychology service, and one as part as the healthy lives in schools programme which brings mindfulness approaches into schools.

This is a really key issue and I know that Councillor Saunders and I will continue to prioritise the issue together across our portfolios, because it cuts across public health and education.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs **moved** and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that Motion 12.5 'Motion regarding Local Authority Mental Health Challenge be taken as the next item of business.'" The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

8.6 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman

Can the Mayor give details of how often all Council managed parks are inspected and when was the last time inspections took place?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

The Council has a duty of care to people who use its facilities including its parks and there are regular regimes of inspection. In particular, Council managed parks with play equipment have a daily inspections with quarterly

operation inspections and an annual external inspection and all inspections are up to date.

Supplementary question from Councillor Oliur Rahman

Yes. Thank you Mr Mayor for your response. After the tragic incident of Alexia I did write to the Corporate Director asking the same question asking for a copy of the reports and who actually carried out those reports. Unfortunately as of today I have yet to receive that information and I would ask you to instruct the Corporate Director to release that information as an elected Member of this Council I believe that I have the right to see that information.

Mayor John Biggs' response to the supplementary question

I am very happy to take that request away but you will appreciate that that specific matter is sub-judice and is subject to investigations by the Health and Safety Executive and the Police. Obviously we are cooperating with those but we cannot prejudge those conclusions and the information that may be provided to them. So I am very happy to take this away and to write to you with a reply but obviously we need to be aware that the processing of events after this incident is not totally in our hands at present.

8.7 Question from Councillor Marc Francis

Will the Lead Member for Environmental Services set out the current estimate of food waste recycling in Tower Hamlets and proportion of properties in the borough currently benefitting from this service?

Response by Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you Councillor Francis for your question. Currently the food waste collection service is offered to low rise properties and houses in the Borough. This comprises about 25,000 properties. In addition 5,000 flats have access to the communal food waste bin. Participation in the scheme varies greatly across the Borough. Most recent monitoring data indicates that on average 17% of households actively participate in the services. The Mayor's manifesto committed to improving the recycling service for the residents in the Borough and as part of the procurement of the Council waste management service we will be reviewing all the recycling provision for residents with a view to improving the recycling service and the rates.

Supplementary question from Councillor Marc Francis

Thanks very much Councillor Miah for that really helpful and positive response. Can I ask him whether he agrees with me that the current level of food waste recycling in Tower Hamlets is not good enough and if that's the case does he agree with me that's because the vast majority of social housing isn't covered by the scheme and amongst private rented and private owners only houses are covered by the scheme.

That being the case, will he therefore commit to consider extending the food waste recycling service to other housing associations such as Poplar Harca, Tower Hamlets Community Homes or East Thames and the other Housing Associations and also to introduce a pilot food waste recycling service to private owned and rented blocks in Tower Hamlets including in Bow East ward.

Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment's response to the supplementary question

One of the challenges we have currently is recognising that we have 80% of high rise buildings and that providing those properties with food waste collection service can only be improving by working with the registered providers. Officers are currently developing the contracts and the specifications for the recycling and waste disposal service and the food waste collection service will play a key role in the new contract. So of course we will work together in the coming years and months to achieve the government target of compulsory recycling of 50% by 2020, we will work together to achieve this.

8.8 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Will the Mayor inform the council as to the current status of the South Quay Masterplan? Since it was launched in 2013 it has been repeatedly delayed, the last delay being welcome as the publicly published Masterplan was inadequate given the scale of challenges in the area. Residents are expecting an update on its status, proposed changes and when it might be published?

Response by Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development

Thanks Councillor Andrew Wood. Can I take this opportunity to remind you of the status of an SPD. The status of an SPD is to shape development permitted through the local plan which has to be consistent with the London Plan, which we have already referred to, and the NPPF. The content of the revised South Quay Master Plan and the revisions will be along the lines that the Mayor referred to in terms of taking a pause and thinking about whether or not we are connecting infrastructure development and design within the South Quay Masterplan area enough to the scale of development.

Can I also just take this opportunity, after reminding you what the status of an SPD is, to say we really welcome a proper debate about the future of development on the Isle of Dogs and across the floor I think we share huge concerns about the role of certain housing associations, but what I don't welcome is a disingenuous approach on this matter, because what you are talking about and some of the motions that you have put forward don't really acknowledge the role of an SPD and I just think that we should start framing the debate that we have in this chamber around an honest debate on how we can best represent our residents.

Supplementary question from Councillor Andrew Wood

So I accept that the South Quay Masterplan is not going to solve everything and I think that one of the issues is residents don't fully understand that and part of our role is to communicate that to them. The question that I would like to ask is that we have six major developments in the pipe line right now including 225 Marsh Wall, Alpha Square, South Quay Plaza 4 and Ballymore's Cuba Street. Do you think that the work that you are doing is going to have any impact on those developments or will have an impact on what happens afterwards?

Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development's response to the supplementary question

I wish to respond partly very enthusiastically and partly very unenthusiastically to your supplementary. My enthusiasm is for the statement that you made is that you recognise the role of the SPD and I hope that it will mean that we can have a grown up conversation about this going forward.

My unenthusiasm, my lack of enthusiasm even, is that you know that we cannot possibly comment on current planning applications and how they may relate to planning policy. I would also just like to remind you about the way that the planning system works and remind you about the scale of the developments in Tower Hamlets and that you will be aware that the Mayor of London does have powers to look into planning applications in Tower Hamlets.

The Mayor of London has since June 2008 chosen not to intervene, chosen not to exercise some of the concerns that you might have wanted to raise with him on 5329 units. So Meridian Gate, South Quay Plaza, I've got the list - it is public information. So when we are talking about development in Tower Hamlets, when we are talking about development in your wards, can we be honest about where the powers for some of this intervention lies. If you want to start talking about why the Mayor of London hasn't actually called in some of these then we would be really interested to talk about it. But let's be honest about the status of an SPD, let's be honest about who and where the influence lies in the scale of development in the Isle of Dogs and lets represent and stand up for the residents of the Isle of Dogs bringing forward decent infrastructure and decent homes for the people that actually need it rather than these motions and this drip, drip approach that you seem to be taking.

8.9 Question from Councillor Candida Ronald

What will the Mayor do to ensure a fair and transparent grants process which ensures that residents have confidence in the fairness of decisions taken by this council?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

Well obviously grants are currently considered as we have discussed already by the Commissioners and they have adopted a policy as well relating to that. In creating my Cabinet, I have appointed Councillor Rachael Saunders to have particular oversight in developing grants policy and the third sector strategy. I am expecting other Cabinet Members to get very actively involved in their areas particularly where they commission services from the third sector or have an interest in the grants regime.

I am meeting very regularly with the Commissioners to talk about how we can very politely encourage them to leave our Borough and to resume our control over the grants process. Part of that is about reassuring people locally that we have a grants regime in which they can have confidence and also about reassuring the government and the Commissioners who are here not of my choosing or not of my making to make sure there is a confidence and we can resume our proper democratic powers.

Supplementary question from Councillor Candida Ronald

Will you ensure that robust evaluation takes place on individual projects and also on programme streams as a whole?

Mayor John Biggs' response to the supplementary question

I am tempted to say just yes, so the answer is yes.

I think for Overview and Scrutiny we need to scrutinise the grants policy as it's evolving. We also I think need to make sure that proper evaluation through the grants unit can be properly seen as being independent of any undue influence by Members or by other people so we need to have a degree of independence there.

We need to have a clear responsibility for policy making through the Cabinet and through setting priorities and we need to have a transparent scrutiny of grant applications through the scrutiny process probably through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We have been talking to the Commissioners about how this may happen. I am hoping that in the next few months we will be able to put together a framework which will allow us to begin to resume control over our grants process.

I would not want to overly enthuse you of the prospect of the Commissioners going out the door tomorrow, but today we have met with them and today as part of the Best Value Improvement Plan they have asked me to start chairing the Best Value Board which the previous Mayor refused to have any engagement with. We have been highlighting our progress on meeting the objectives set by the Commissioners in consultation with the Councillors and the previous Mayor. Together, I think that we have a very real prospect of making progress on this.

I think while I have the floor it is very important and this is quite a complicated issue, the Commissioners have asked to speak to Cabinet Members. I think it would be helpful if they spoke to back bench Members as well, they have got some very useful insights into the importance of changing the culture in the way in which we make decisions in the Council. This is not me picking on the previous Mayor, you may say for a change. I am not picking on the previous Mayor, I am picking on the culture of the Council and this is probably true of a lot of old fashioned Councils that need to creep into the 21st Century, where personal connections played an undue role in the decision of grants.

I think we need to change the culture in which we manage our relationship with third sector organisations because they play such an important role and because we are selling our people short in the Borough if we allow anything different from that to happen.

8.10 Question from Councillor Shahed Ali

What is the total area – in sq metres - given to the Conservative Group Office and Independent Group Office under the Mayor John Biggs new renovation plan for the first floor? Has the space allocation based upon proportionality of members i.e. 15 Independent Group members compared to 5 Conservative Group members as is with committee positions, or has the allocation been based upon 'returning the favour' to the Conservative party for 'borrowed votes' in the 2015 mayoral election as stated by the Conservative Group leader, Cllr. Peter Golds?

Response by Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources

Thank you Mr Speaker. The starting point for the moves that have taken place over the last few weeks was to make sure that all Members of the Council have adequate space to do the work that they have been elected to do and discharge the responsibilities they have been given. I think that it is interesting to note that as part of that rearrangement, the amount of space that the current Mayor has is 43sqm compared with the 95sqm that was occupied by the previous Mayor. So a very, very significant cut in the amount of space occupied by the Mayor.

In looking at the reorganisation there were a number of issues that had to be taken into account - achieving the most economic solution, thinking about the limitations that there are on the available space, the mechanical and electrical works. All of those things had to be thought about. But in answer to the specific question, the Conservative Group space allocation is 45.36sqm, I am told, and the Independent Group space allocation is 41.33sqm. So clearly in response to two points that was not based on proportionality but neither was it based on returning of favours. I think the point that's quoted in the question about borrowed votes I think makes reference to a comment that Councillor Golds made at the count if I recall it right. But I am absolutely confident that the votes that John Biggs received in that Mayoral election were all from people who thought that he would be the very best person to do the job.

Supplementary question from Councillor Shahed Ali

Thanks for your answer David. I think Mayor John Biggs should take particular note of this as since your election we have all been talking about promoting a spirit of equality, a spirit of fairness, a spirit of openness and I think it goes to say without doubt and I would be very surprised if you were not to concur with me, I feel very disturbed by the fact that you feel it's appropriate for 15 elected Members of this Council, who have been elected by a very large proportion of the community and also have an important duty to carry out as elected Members in opposition. For that we obviously require appropriate space which allows all the Councillors to come in, as and when they choose, so that they can carry out their duties to the satisfaction that the residents of this Borough deserve.

I think it is fair to say that I am completely bewildered by how, whoever decided could possibly think that it is acceptable, to allow a minority group of five Members to occupy more space. It might sound like 45 and 41 but when you put that into square feet you are talking about 60ft more space. So the Tory Group, who have only five bodies, they cannot possibly have more than five bodies who need to use that space, when we have 15 bodies on this side, the largest opposition group in this Council have been merely afforded less space, 50 - 60 square foot less space than the Conservative Group. I believe that that is outrageous.

Do you believe in the spirit of what I have just said that it may have been unfair to allocate the amount of space afforded to us in comparison with the amount of space that you have clearly afforded to a minority group of five Councillors and will we see this revised?

Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources' response to the supplementary question

I have not had a conversation with officers about the detailed scheduling of this but clearly there are constraints if you want to spend as little money as possible and this was an office reorganisation which, as the Mayor explained in his report, was a much, much cheaper one than the one that took place a number of years ago.

I think the Independent Group needs to really also consider whether or not the number of spaces available in that room is really inadequate for the day to day work, the number of people able to come in during the day and I think it also important to recognise that there is next door to the room that they have, what is called a Conversation Room. There is a space there which is not allocated specifically to any group and is available to Councillors, if more Councillors are in and wish to meet, and there is also the Councillor meeting room. So I suspect that in practical terms and day to day terms, the space is adequate and that there are additional rooms available if Councillors from any group actually need to meet and have broader discussions.

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. The Service Head, Democratic Services stated that written responses would be provided to the questions. (Note: The written responses are included in Appendix 'A' to these minutes.)

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 Service Head, Democratic Services gave apologies for absence from the Independent Person and explained that whilst she was unable to be present at the meeting, any questions or comments made would be reported back to the Independent Person or the Standards (Advisory) Committee as appropriate.

The Council welcomed the report. A number of Members thanked the Independent Person for her work and report. Councillor Peter Golds considered that the report went to the heart of the issues covered, and he endorsed the Independent Person's comments regarding the length of time taken to deal with many complaints. Councillor Golds hoped that the report would be submitted to the Constitution Working Party when it started meeting to conduct the forthcoming governance review. Councillor Danny Hassell concurred with Councillor Golds' comments and thanked the Independent person for her work with the Standards Advisory Committee.

The recommendations in the report were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

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**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

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.

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**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

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).

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.

Councillor Shafiqul Haque **moved** an amendment to delete the following sentence from the motion: "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." Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs and Councillor Rachael Saunders indicated that they would not accept the amendment, which was not seconded.

Following debate, the motion as printed in the agenda was put to the vote and was **agreed** unanimously. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

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.

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**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

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.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

No motion to exclude the press and public was passed.

15. EXEMPT MOTIONS

No business was transacted under this agenda item.

The meeting ended at 10.32 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

APPENDIX A – WRITTEN RESPONSES TO PUBLIC AND MEMBERS' QUESTIONS THAT WERE NOT PUT AT THE MEETING**6.3 Question from Mr Mohammed S. Rahman:**

What sports and recreation provisions are available there for youth and young in my Mile End ward, particularly for teenagers below 18 and of 10-12 age groups?

Response by Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Culture

The Youth Service works with 13 to 19 year olds and up to 25 with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Urban Adventure Base (UAB) is located in the Mile End Park and offers sports, water based activities and youth activities in the evening. The Urban Adventure Base also offers free gym sessions and has a fully kitted gym which is used by SEND young people on certain nights. The service also delivers activities for young carers every Tuesday from 5.00pm to 7.00pm.

The East London Tabernacle (ELT) Church also delivers youth facilities on Monday from 6.30pm to 9pm and the Youth Service delivers a second session on Friday from 6pm to 9pm. The service also delivers a 3rd session every Wednesday from 4.30pm to 7.30pm with East End Homes.

Local Area Partnership 6 (covers Mile End and Bromely by Bow)

The Youth Service also has sports and recreation activities taking place from Linc Centre (Mon/Wed/Fri from 6pm to 9pm and Sat from 3pm to 6pm), Marnier Centre (Mon/Wed/Thur from 6pm to 9pm and Sunday 6pm to 9pm) and Burdett Neighbourhood Centre (Mon/Wed/Thur from 6pm to 9pm and Sunday 6pm to 9pm).

Mile End Park Leisure Centre offers low cost access to indoor leisure facilities for children and young people, including free swimming on Fridays for any Tower Hamlets residents during public swimming sessions across all centres and free swimming on Saturdays. In addition, children can swim for £1 at other times. The stadium and associated pitches are used by a number of sports clubs (athletics and pitch sports) offering activities for children and young people. Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest (and subsidies for young people) pitch hire rates in London.

6.5 Question from Mr Chris Nineham:

The austerity policies being pursued by this government have been a disaster for this borough.

Will you join leading figures in the community in Tower Hamlets in encouraging the biggest possible turnout for the anti-austerity protests organised by the TUC and the People's Assembly at the Conservative Party conference in Manchester on 3-7 October?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

The Mayor and Council have made quite clear their position on the impact of austerity policies – particularly benefit cuts – on the poorest sections of our communities.

I note the protests being planned by the TUC and the People's Assembly. Of course it must be up to individuals to choose whether they wish to participate in any particular protest activity, but I am happy to encourage those who support this cause to make their feelings known in this way

6.6 Question from Ms Rachel Vincent:

When will Dame Colet and the Haileybury Centre be finished?

Response by Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development

Building work is progressing well on the Dame Colet and Haileybury Centre site and is due to complete on 7th October 2015. Following a fit-out period, the Haileybury Centre will open to provide facilities for the young people of the borough.

6.11 Question from Ms Lucy Rogers:

Developers are getting away with increasingly low provision of affordable housing due to the fact that their financial viability appraisals (FVAs) are private and their claims of being strapped for cash cannot be assessed by the Public. Meanwhile developers continue to build major luxury schemes in Tower Hamlets.

This situation is even acknowledged by the Mayor of London to be weighed too heavily in favour of developers, while other boroughs such as Greenwich have decided to make FVA's public. Will this Council in turn now make Financial Viability Appraisals transparent and public so that the right benefits arising from development will accrue to the community?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

As part of my drive to increase the transparency of the Council, I am very keen to explore how we can publish viability assessments.

The Council is monitoring relevant developments and decisions on this matter including the position of Greenwich, other boroughs such as Islington who are exploring the adoption of viability guidance.

The Council is already part of the Inter-Borough Viability Working Group, with 20 other London local authorities and we are working on a Viability Protocol to

standardise a number of key viability parameters and make clear the group's approach towards transparency of viability appraisals.

The Council is also in the process of receiving legal advice in respect of this matter in order to ensure that any action the Council takes is appropriately considered and that any risks can be properly mitigated.

6.12 Question from Mr Ahmed Hussain:

Does the council have different (or equal) procedure on "Compulsory Purchase Order(s)" in relation to Social Landlords oppose to individual Freeholders as both own their own land?

Response by Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development

In relation to your query, the procedures are of equal status. As a body conferred with statutory compulsory purchase powers by central government, the council can make an order if required which includes all land interests in a specified area whether for example leasehold, freehold or licensed. Such orders will only be made as a last resort following attempts at voluntarily negotiated settlements to acquire land interests, and where the council is convinced the advantages of the Compulsory Purchase Order outweigh the interests of the individuals, organisations and companies affected.

Further information is available in government publications such as this booklet available through the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compulsory-purchase-and-compensation-booklet-1-procedure>

8.2 Question from Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury

Does the Council have any standard policy to protect tenants from unjust evictions by private landlords?

Response by Councillor Sirajul Islam, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management

There is no policy as such but, of course, the Council opposes any unjust evictions by private landlords. Our Housing Advice service seeks to prevent such evictions by negotiating with landlords, and providing tenants with information about the legal and advice services they can draw upon.

Once a household presents as homeless following an unlawful eviction, the Service initially contacts the landlord to advise them of the fact of the illegal act, their responsibilities as landlords and the correct procedure for obtaining possession. This can often lead to the landlord letting the household return to their tenancy while possession is sought through the courts.

Where a landlord refuses to let the household return then the household is advised to seek legal advice to claim compensation.

The Housing Advice team also instructs Legal Services on prosecuting landlords and the Council has successfully prosecuted landlords for unlawful eviction in the past on a small number of occasions.

The Council runs a Landlords' Forum which serves to advise and educate landlords on their responsibilities and to provide support and information on a range of topics.

8.11 Question from Councillor Andrew Cregan

Following the publication of a Money Advice Trust report on the issue last month, can the Mayor share with the Council what measures he will take to address a legacy of this local authority whereby we are ranked among the top 10 worst in the country for resorting to bailiffs for the recovery of resident debts?

Response by Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources

The Money Advice Trust publication highlights an important issue regarding the use of enforcement agents to collect outstanding unpaid debts to the council.

It is important to note that the use of Enforcement Agents (Bailiffs) comes only after a strict legislative process is followed and always as a last resort.

Enforcement agents are used to recover unpaid penalty charge notices for a range of parking related offences which make up three quarters (23,448) of the total quoted in the report (31,710).

A quarter of the total relates to unpaid council tax (7,503) or business rates (758). In all cases, a bill, reminder notices, a summons, and a liability order notification are all issued prior to the issue to enforcement agents for collection.

In addition to the legislative requirements, SMS messages and emails are sent to the taxpayers reminding them that they are in arrears with their payments and giving them opportunity to bring their instalments up to date to avoid any enforcement action being taken.

To provide further support to people, the council will also be holding bailiff surgeries from next month (October) inviting them to come in to discuss the debts they may have and how they can be supported.

Throughout the debt recovery process, all residents and businesses are encouraged to contact us at every opportunity.

In all cases, where vulnerability issues are identified, these cases are returned to the Council with a view to resolving the case without the use of an Enforcement Agent.

The proactive work undertaken to support people has seen the use of Enforcement Agents reduce year on year in terms of council tax and business rates from a figure of 9879 in 2011/12 to 8261 in 2014/15.

8.12 Question from Julia Dockerill

To ask the Mayor whether he will be making a decision shortly on the long-term future of St George's Swimming Pools, to enable the council to move forward as soon as possible with a comprehensive leisure strategy for the West of the borough?

Response by Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Culture

The Council's current borough-wide Leisure Strategy runs until 2019 and sets out the strategic direction for the council's Leisure facilities. As part of an exercise to refresh this strategy, the Council is in the process of commissioning condition surveys of all the borough's leisure centres.

The outcomes of the condition survey report will then inform the Leisure Facilities Strategy and any subsequent decisions regarding the borough's leisure stock, including St Georges Swimming Pools.

The Leisure Facilities strategy will set the strategic direction for the future network. Any specific changes to individual leisure centres will come forward as separate projects and will be subject to consultation with residents.

8.13 Question from Councillor Shah Alam

There seems to be a general increase in anti-social behaviour, drug dealing, cannabis being smoked and youth hanging around in private sector properties and their adjoining areas in the Borough – what action can you take to address and minimise such issues that have a clear impact on the residents, community spirit, local atmosphere and the general environment of our streets in the Borough?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

For the last two consecutive years there have been decreases in the amount of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incident reports made to the Police via the non-emergency reporting line (101), with last year seeing a reduction of 1,597 incident requests for response which equates to 2.8%.

Time period	ASB complaints	Difference from previous 12 months	Difference in Year %
Sep 13 to Aug 14	18670	-2003	-9.7%

Sep 14 to Aug 15	17073	-1597	-2.8%
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We are working with all our partners to ensure that this sustained reduction continues year on year by:

- Expanding the joint uniformed patrols with the police in key identified hot-spot areas;
- Continued use of Civil Injunctions and Criminal Behaviour Orders;
- More preventative action from the Rapid Response Team of detached youth workers to key identified hot-spot areas;
- Continued joint working with Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEOs) and Drug Intervention Project workers;
- More use of the Councils deployable CCTV camera network to key identified hot-spot areas;
- Continued deployment of dog handling and drugs dogs to tower blocks;
- The use of Public Spaces Protection Orders to restrict and manage ASB in key identified hot-spot areas;
- More joint enforcement operations with Public Realm and Safer Communities; and
- An expansion of police powers for the THEOs

8.14 Question from Councillor Peter Golds:

Will the Mayor update residents on the current status of Project Stone (the re-development of the four One Housing Group estates on the Isle of Dogs) and what discussions have taken place with One Housing Group so far, and confirm when the council first become aware of Project Stone?

Response by Mayor John Biggs

Project Stone is a concept that One Housing Group are exploring but no formal pre-application planning discussions have been held.

Officers at OHG did approach Council officers in September 2012 to briefly discuss the idea.

Council officers and politicians were involved in a meeting in the Spring of 2014 but again firm plans were not discussed.

Council officers have met twice with OHG since July 2014 on the principles of redevelopment, but not the actual proposal referred to.

8.15 Question from Councillor Mahbub Alam

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Management, Transport, Parking Services, Road Safety and Highways illustrate his priorities for the forthcoming year?

Response by Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment

My priorities for this year will be to ensure that the additional £200k invested to improve cleansing across the borough makes a visible difference to our borough. I will also focus on developing the strategic framework for the new waste contracts that will start in 2018. I will be driving the Council's approach to developing a cycling strategy which reflects the pan-London approach to safer cycling. Finally I will require the service area to operate within a robust performance framework which will demonstrate greater transparency and accountability within the portfolio.

8.16 Question from Councillor Craig Aston

Parts of the Borough especially Limehouse, Wapping and the Isle of Dogs suffer from frequent road and bus interruptions especially from the regular sports events that pass through the area. Such sports events are welcome but in geographically constrained locations they cause a great deal of disruption and annoyance to residents. Will the Mayor work with other Boroughs across East London to vary the routes where possible, possibly on a rota basis to ensure that the effects of such disruption is more widely spread without losing the ability to host such events in London?

Response by Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Culture

Whilst we do acknowledge the concerns raised, some events such as Triathlon, Ride London & the London Marathon are high profile annual events which are managed by Transport for London (TfL).

As these events are led by TfL & the principal route is on their road network the onus is with the organisers to communicate with stakeholders & mitigate the impact of these events.

The Council is consulted for these events and will do everything within its powers to work with the partners and TfL to minimise impact and disruption that are caused to residents and business along the routes. However, as such events do have wider benefits in terms of promoting sustainable transport and healthier lifestyles it is important that we enable the organisers to facilitate activities that will be advantageous to residents and businesses in Tower Hamlets.