



Meeting of the

TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL

Wednesday, 18 November 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

VENUE

Council Chamber, 1st Floor,
Town Hall, Mulberry Place,
5 Clove Crescent,
London E14 2BG

Democratic Services Contact:

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**TO THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER
HAMLETS**

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to be held in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG** at 7.30 p.m. on **WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2015**

Will Tuckley
Chief Executive

Public Information

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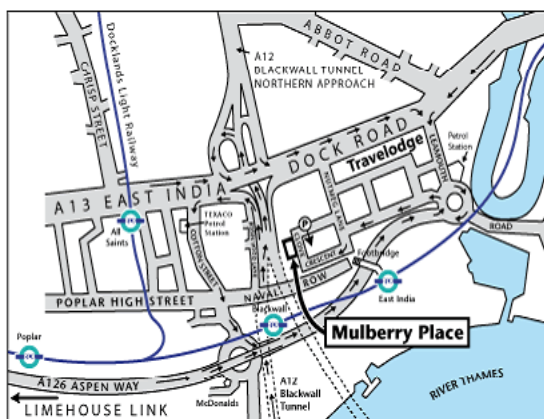
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QR code for smart phone users

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2015

7.30 p.m.

PAGE
NUMBER

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

1 - 4

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992. See attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

3. **MINUTES**

5 - 42

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on 16 September 2015.

4. **TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

5. **TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**

43 - 44

The Council Procedure Rules provide for a maximum of three petitions to be presented at an Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

The deadline for receipt of petitions for this Council meeting is noon on Thursday 12 November 2015.

However at the time of agenda despatch, the maximum number of petitions has already been received as set out in the attached report.

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

45 - 48

The questions which have been received from members of the public for this Council meeting are set out in the attached report. A maximum period of 20 minutes is allocated to this agenda item.

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Council's Constitution provides for the Elected Mayor to give a report at each Ordinary Council Meeting.

A maximum of five minutes is allowed for the Elected Mayor's report, following which the Speaker of the Council will invite the respective political group leaders to respond for up to one minute each if they wish.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 49 - 56

The questions which have been received from Councillors to be put at this Council meeting are set out in the attached report. A maximum period of 30 minutes is allocated to this agenda item.

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

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Nil items.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 57 - 78

The motions submitted by Councillors for debate at this meeting are set out in the attached report.

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Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Members' Code of Conduct at Part 5.1 of the Council's Constitution.

Please note that the question of whether a Member has an interest in any matter, and whether or not that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, is for that Member to decide. Advice is available from officers as listed below but they cannot make the decision for the Member. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending a meeting.

Interests and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

You have an interest in any business of the authority where that business relates to or is likely to affect any of the persons, bodies or matters listed in section 4.1 (a) of the Code of Conduct; and might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of yourself, a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected.

You must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any such interest, for inclusion in the Register of Members' Interests which is available for public inspection and on the Council's Website.

Once you have recorded an interest in the Register, you are not then required to declare that interest at each meeting where the business is discussed, unless the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI).

A DPI is defined in Regulations as a pecuniary interest of any of the descriptions listed at **Appendix A** overleaf. Please note that a Member's DPIs include his/her own relevant interests and also those of his/her spouse or civil partner; or a person with whom the Member is living as husband and wife; or a person with whom the Member is living as if they were civil partners; if the Member is aware that that other person has the interest.

Effect of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on participation at meetings

Where you have a DPI in any business of the Council you must, unless you have obtained a dispensation from the authority's Monitoring Officer following consideration by the Dispensations Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Committee:-

- not seek to improperly influence a decision about that business; and
- not exercise executive functions in relation to that business.

If you are present at a meeting where that business is discussed, you must:-

- Disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, if later; and
- Leave the room (including any public viewing area) for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision

When declaring a DPI, Members should specify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which the interest relates. This procedure is designed to assist the public's understanding of the meeting and to enable a full record to be made in the minutes of the meeting.

Where you have a DPI in any business of the authority which is not included in the Member's register of interests and you attend a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, in addition to disclosing the interest to that meeting, you must also within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the Register.

Further advice

For further advice please contact:-

Melanie Clay, Director, Law, Probity and Governance, 020 7364 4800

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

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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 Khaled Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Shafiqul Haque
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Councillor Clare Harrison
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.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2015

PETITIONS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, PROBITY AND GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY

1. The Council's Constitution provides for up to three petitions to be presented at each ordinary Council meeting. These are taken in order of receipt. This report sets out the valid petitions submitted for presentation at the Council meeting on Wednesday 18th November 2015.
2. The deadline for receipt of petitions for this meeting is noon on Thursday 12th November 2015. However, at the time of agenda despatch the maximum number of petitions has already been received as set out overleaf.
3. The texts of the petitions received for presentation to this meeting are set out in the attached report. In each case the petitioners may address the meeting for no more than three minutes. Members may then question the petitioners for a further four minutes. Finally, the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair of Committee may respond to the petition for up to three minutes.
4. Any outstanding issues will be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will respond to those outstanding issues in writing within 28 days.
5. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.

5.1 Petition calling for a 30 MPH speed limit along the A12 Blackwall Tunnel Approach (Petition from Julia Rodrigues and others).

The A12 is one of London's most congested and polluted highways. Not only is it a major contributor to ill health among local residents, but it cuts the community of Poplar in half, leaving families and businesses isolated and divided. Slowing traffic to 30MPH would greatly improve safety for those using the two crossings in the area, especially as it would give more time for children and the elderly to cross.

We ask Tower Hamlets Council to hear our plea and bring in a 30MPH speed limit and do more to alleviate congestion, in order to make our community a safer place.

5.2 Petition in support of opening an Idea Store at Bethnal Green Road, E2.

We, the undersigned, residents of Tower Hamlets, call upon John Biggs, Mayor of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, to open a much needed Idea store on Bethnal Green Road, in order to support local residents, families and children.

5.3 Petition calling on the Mayor and Council to support the businesses of Chapman Street. (Petition from Matthew Wood and others)

We the undersigned businesses and customers of Chapman Street shops, Shadwell, are requesting that our Ward Councillors, Cllr Harun Miah and Cllr Rabina Khan, and Mayor Biggs support us in ensuring that our businesses are protected from Network Rail's proposals to gradually quash our enterprises. Over 10 years ago the areas in and around the Railway arches on Chapman Street were concerns of anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder, which resulted in knife crime and gang fights. With the first handful of businesses specialising in groceries and Bangladeshi fish and veg, the area gradually began to regenerate with increased uptake of businesses, The businesses provided jobs for local people and became as it is today, a vibrant and thriving enterprise zone, instead of the no go area it was many years ago.

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2015
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, PROBITY AND GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions submitted by members of the public, for response by the Mayor or appropriate Cabinet Member at the Council Meeting on 18th November 2015.
2. The Council's Constitution sets a maximum time limit of twenty minutes for this item.
3. A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one brief supplementary question without notice to the Member who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Supplementary questions and Members' responses to written and supplementary questions are each limited to two minutes.
4. Any question which cannot be dealt with during the twenty minutes allocated for public questions, either because of lack of time or because of non-attendance of the questioner or the Member to whom it was put, will be dealt with by way of a written answer.
5. Unless the Speaker of Council decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question, but any Member of the Council may move, without discussion, that the matter raised by a question be referred for consideration by the Cabinet or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee.

QUESTIONS

Six public questions have been submitted as set out below:-

6.1 Question from Ms Lillian Collins:

Can the Mayor update me on the progress regarding Poplar Baths, including when the work will be completed, and when we can expect it to be open for local residents?

6.2 Question from Mr Ahmed Hussain:

I have been previously informed by Councillor Blake that procedures surrounding Compulsory Purchase Orders are of equal status for both social landlords and freeholders. Given this, would the Council support the freeholders of Alpha Grove, E14, to purchase amenity space and garages within the freeholding area, and if so what assistance could the Council offer?

Freeholders could re-develop the freeholding area and provide the Council with at least 33.33% social housing (town houses with a garden).

6.3 Question from Mr Jamir Chowdhury:

Can the Mayor please explain what he is doing to get more women into employment, particularly from the BME community?

6.4 Question from Mr Frederick Michael James:

Can the Mayor give an update on the current programme for Landlord Licensing Scheme?

6.5 Question from Mr Owen Corrigan:

Recent figures released by the London Metropolitan Police show an increase in reported hate crimes across London. Measures for Homophobic, Islamophobic and Anti-semitic hate crimes all increased city-wide. Homophobic crimes were up by 27%, Islamophobic crimes were up by 64%, and Anti-semitic crimes were up by 62%. We can all be pleased to note that in the borough of Tower Hamlets Islamophobic hate crimes actually fell in the year to Sept 2015 - by 12%. However, reported Homophobic hate crimes increased in this period by 15% ; Anti-semitic hate crimes increased by fully 100% - doubling in the previous 12 months.

I ask the Cabinet Member, what measures are already in place to tackle the issue of hate crime in the borough and what is the Council's strategy to ensure that next year's figures show a decrease across all categories of hate crime in Tower Hamlets?

6.6 Question from Mr Sean Michael:

Can the Cabinet Member please inform me as to what are the rights of East Thames Housing association to evict 142 residents including key workers with a few months' notice and neither the housing association or the local council advising on any real options that don't result in their lives being shattered. Whether it's a much longer time for people to buy the rent properties via shared ownership (as is proposed by East Thames but without enough time to do it), or help to move somewhere else affordable for those who cannot afford to move?

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2015

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, PROBITY AND GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Speaker, the Mayor or the relevant Committee/Sub-Committee Chair at the Council meeting on Wednesday 18th November 2015
2. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted.
3. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. There is a time limit of thirty minutes for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any question not answered within this time will be dealt with by way of a written response. The Speaker will decide the time allocated to each question.
5. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

25 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

8.1 Question from Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed

How many families has the council placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks in each of the last three years?

8.2 Question from Councillor Shahed Ali:

As result of a call-in by the Independent Group, part time Mayor John Biggs was forced to reveal his secret decision, taken behind closed doors, about Rich Mix grant funding, resulting in a statement, according to media, which states that there is no longer a court case to recover public money from Rich Mix that was owed to the Council. Rich Mix – an organisation created by Labour and essentially run by Tower Hamlets Labour Party - to be given substantial sums of cash in the millions by Labour Mayor Biggs without seeing a business plan, raises serious questions of potential nepotism and cronyism. Will Mayor John Biggs ensure that all documents, court papers, emails and information relating to Rich Mix is made public immediately according to the practice of transparency, accountability, value for money and open data principles under Transparency Act 2014 and the local authority's Best Value duty placed on him as the Executive Mayor? Contrary to his rhetoric of transparency and openness, information and documents have been hidden away in secret from the public and elected members thus far and part-time Mayor John Biggs has failed to ensure that these are made public, also excluding opposition councillors who have challenged the secret and questionable decision-making and highlighted concerns?

8.3 Question from Councillor Amina Ali:

Can the Mayor outline the next steps for the Civic Centre?

8.4 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman:

In view of the financial restraints facing the council, will the Mayor confirm when the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity will be fully implemented and when East End Life will be replaced by a quarterly communication?

8.5 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell:

Can you please update the council on what plans you have to continue to improve the life chances of children at the start of their life, and to increase the number of children reaching a good level of development by age 5?

8.6 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman:

Could the part time Mayor, who still holds two jobs, explain as to how his decision to evict the residents of TUSH (62 Bruce Road) sits with the pre-election Labour campaign and promise by Labour to support them against the Council?

8.7 Question from Councillor Marc Francis:

Will the Lead Member for Adults Services explain the action taken by LBTH following the Care Quality Commission inspection of Pat Shaw House in December 2014, which found serious breaches of regulations relating to repairs and maintenance, medicines management and assessment and care planning by Gateway Housing Association?

8.8 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood:

Will the Mayor inform the Council on the progress of the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework that was launched by the GLA in July and who the members of the supervisory board are?

8.9 Question from Councillor Dave Chesterton:

The current restrictions on the issue of parking permits for 'car free' properties is causing difficulties for many residents, particularly those with large families. Can the Mayor please give an update on his plans to review controlled parking in the borough?

8.10 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan:

What are Mayor Biggs and relevant Cabinet Member doing in relation to supporting victims of domestic abuse? Can you provide the strategic overview, monitoring of performance and securing budget/funding for this important area which affects many vulnerable people in the Borough – particularly women, children and old people?

8.11 Question from Councillor John Pierce:

Can the lead member give us an update on extending payment options for Tower Hamlets Homes leaseholders for Decent Homes Works?

8.12 Question from Julia Dockerill:

Will the Mayor publish a publicly available list of all unoccupied buildings owned and maintained by the council and all unoccupied and currently unused land in its possession?

8.13 Question from Councillor Md. Maium Miah:

The Government has announced that local councils will retain all the money they raise from business rates. Can the Mayor inform the Council what it means for Tower Hamlets, and how much he expects Tower Hamlets to raise, and how they are going

to use this money? And will he ensure it benefits all sections of the community, particularly small businesses across our Borough?

8.14 Question from Councillor Peter Golds:

Will the Mayor confirm how many funerals have taken place at the council acquired burial site at Kemnal Park, Chislehurst? Will the Mayor indicate the level of subsidy for each of these burials and the cost to the taxpayer?

8.15 Question from Councillor Ohid Ahmed:

Can the Cabinet Member responsible provide monthly and yearly breakdowns of crime levels, particularly murders, taken place in Tower Hamlets since 2010 until present? Could the Cabinet Member also provide brief summary of what kind of crimes have increased and what seem to be the causes and what is the Council doing to address some of these issues, aside from working with Police and stakeholders?

8.16 Question from Councillor Craig Aston:

In view of the escalating anti-social behaviour on Ropemakers Fields, Narrow Street, which has seen fireworks ignited and aimed at resident's windows, will the Mayor request the police to restore order as opposed to remaining in a police car, before driving away, as happened on the weekend of October 31st?

8.17 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani:

Part time Mayor John Biggs has been quoted that the Council will require £60m worth of cuts to corporate budget. Can the Mayor inform us where did he get this figure from, what areas is he basing his quotes on and what evidence is there to support this claim? And why this important information has not been made available to Members or even discussed fully with an official report at Overview and Scrutiny Committee before going public with his claim? Is that what he means by his new so called transparency and accountability rhetoric that he can just pluck figures from thin air without informing, putting a report or a proper discussion? Will he ensure that concerns raised by the Trade Unions and staff/officers at large are fully taken on board and made public and any budget proposals are backed up with meaningful information and data rather than ambiguous headline figures and spin?

8.18 Question from Councillor Mahbub Alam:

At the last Council meeting, it is recollected that a Councillor stated that East End Life (EEL) costs the Council £1.5m – can the Mayor tell us if that is the correct figure because you (Mayor or Cabinet) did not challenge this figure or seemed concerned about its use – Does it mean that Mayor Biggs and Labour administration agrees with this figure, if not what is the current cost? Also can the Mayor circulate the following information in relation to EEL and wider communications review, in writing to all members, as part of the response:

- The business case and value for money report/work about EEL that we understand had been produced to articulate its value and contribution
- A copy of letter written by the Unison about EEL
- Who will you consult about the proposal to reduce it from weekly to as little as quarterly to meet Government diktat – non binding - and how it is being publicised and consulted upon – keeping in mind residents feedback about consultation recently to OSTC consultation. (If not already being done, can the consultation be extended through residents associations, Council’s own online e-account, posters and information in idea stores)
- What is the risk of job losses and/or any kind of redeployment or redundancies
- What is the purpose and objective of consultation
- Why the consultation questions were being changed on daily basis and who is amending them. Are any councillors involved and who are they and what has been their contribution?
- How will you reach out to hard to reach/engage residents
- How will you reach out to those whose first language is not English
- Who will be conducting the review and when? When will it commence, what are the scope, time-scale and cost involved?
- Will the Members be consulted and how?
- Has/will the Equality Impact Assessments and risk assessment been/be carried out? If not why not and when will it take place? Will it be public and available to all Members?

8.19 Question from Councillor Abdul Asad:

Following 29 October announcement by the DCLG in relation to Tower Hamlets Commissioners, Can you please provide the details about:

- What details have now been taken away from the Commissioners and have been given back to the elected representatives as a result of this announcement?
- What powers still remain with the Commissioners?
- What role, if any, have the Commissioners played or will play in setting out the budget?
- Given that most of the requirements have been fulfilled, what endeavours are being made to ensure that Commissioners – who are costing the residents and the Council a lot of money - £800 per day for the lead Commissioner, and there are a few of them at various rates – are gone back now rather than in 6 months’ time or until 2017?

- Why the Mayor Biggs has been so reluctant to officially ask the Commissioners, appointed by Eric Pickles, to leave publicly?
- Why the Labour Leader's motion was not debated in the Chamber, despite Labour majority, which among usual political rhetoric and point scoring had a genuine reason and motive, calling for Commissioners' withdrawal ?
- Was assurance(s) given or sought not met ? and if these assurances were met what were these - in Mayor Biggs secret meeting with the Secretary of State of Communities and Local Government, accompanied by Deputy Mayor Rachel Saunders but apparently without the other two Deputy Mayors, Islam and Khatun - since Commissioners are essentially staying put, despite spin and intense rumours that Commissioners will be completely and comprehensively leaving Tower Hamlets, in a matter of days – and these rumours have been going on since August 2015 yet this announcement has been disappointing.

8.20 Question from Councillor Mohammad Mustaqim:

Can the Mayor confirm that he will stand up to Tory Government cuts - including welfare cuts, tax credit cuts and all others that are targeting many of our residents and particularly working families - as well as protecting all frontline services in his forthcoming budget by carefully taking advantage of new Government announcement on 5th September 2015 (which Independent Group Cllr Rabina Khan argued for locally and it is welcomed by us, provided equality, fairness and safety net issues are addressed in the details) that local Councils will be able to retain all their Business rates ?

8.21 Question from Councillor Harun Miah:

Boris Johnson's decision to take control of the proposed redevelopment of Bishopsgate Goodsyrd comes after an appeal from the developers and has the effect of preventing Tower Hamlets and Hackney councillors deciding the scheme in planning committee where local people can raise objections easily. The project, which includes two skyscrapers of 47 and 43 storeys and 100 high-end shops and offices and 1300 homes (of which only 10 per cent will be affordable) has been slated by local campaign groups who fear it will drive out the area's creative industries, force local traders on Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road out of business and cast a shadow over local housing estates. What is the personal and official position as Mayor of Tower Hamlets about the Goodsyrd development with 43 and 46 storeys Tower blocks (is it just that he is not happy about the height and minor concerns but okay with the proposal otherwise?) that the Mayor of Hackney has publicly branded as "wholly inappropriate" and called Boris's intervention as "cynical" – Do you agree with Mayor of Hackney about this? Given that Mayor John Biggs draws two allowances as Mayor of Tower Hamlets and local GLA member, has he made a compelling case (please provide examples and links to the contribution or representation) to ensure developers and City Hall do the best for the area rather than be simply driven by profit at the expense of what is good for local residents. Does the Mayor have the sway to hold Boris to account or the courage to stand up for local residents – otherwise what good is part time Mayor Biggs, and his two jobs, are to local people?

8.22 Question from Councillor Suluk Ahmed:

What is the total figure of combined allowances from Mayor Biggs' two jobs – GLA and local Mayor - not withstanding any forgoing of allowances, associated rhetoric and spin - just the total figure from his two jobs? Does he claim any other allowance(s), salary, income-in-kind support/donation or finance except his two jobs? What interests – personal and discloseable pecuniary interests – have been recorded and declared by Mayor Biggs at the GLA and in Council meetings in last three years and since election in Tower Hamlets. Please provide details and breakdown with information to explain the level of interest and involvement.

8.23 Question from Councillor Shah Alam:

Under the new enlightened era of transparency and accountability, what is the Council protocol if a Member or Mayor is publicly hosting an event or a foreign dignitary etc., using Council resources, inviting members of community and other stakeholders, in the Council Chamber or Committee Room – a tax payer funded building and rooms – in terms of inviting other Members, regardless of political affiliation. Should it be extended to all Members or just to certain political groups and parties? Following this, what sanctions or procedures are prescribed in the Code of Conduct, Standards regime or elsewhere if a Member or the Mayor fails to adhere to the guidelines and what should officers be doing to impress this upon members if any such events or meetings are organised by using offices of power and authority by administration where other elected members are deliberately excluded, since no invitation has been extended, from such public meetings/events which are hosted at the council facility?

8.24 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan:

What is the total cost - direct, indirect and associated - in refurbishing and redesigning the first floor as ordered by the part time two-jobs Mayor Biggs after his election in June 2015? Please specify the facts and figures with a breakdown in relation to fixtures, fittings, furniture, material, painting, labour, employee hours, contractors etc. and any other costs that are incurred so far and or are expected?

8.25 Question from Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury:

Sometimes members get complaints about Registered Social Landlords for their poor performance and poor customer care. Does the council have any standard policy to monitor the performance of registered social landlords?

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2015

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, PROBITY AND GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY

1. Eleven motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 18th November 2015.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21st May 2008, the motions are listed by turns, one from each group, continuing in rotation until all motions submitted are included. The rotation starts with any group(s) whose motion(s) were not reached at the previous meeting.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS

Set out overleaf are the motions that have been submitted.

12.1 Motion regarding Rich Mix Cultural Foundation

Proposer: Councillor Shahed Ali

Secunder: Councillor Oliur Rahman

In assisting Mayor John Biggs in his commitment to this borough for openness and transparency, myself and Cllr Shahed Ali called-in the restricted report on Rich Mix, where not until the night before the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, were elected members privileged enough to actually see its contents. The report was hidden as well from the public, where Mayor Biggs authorised the discontinuation of the council's litigation against Rich Mix to claim a debt of £850k as well as authorising a grant of over £1.5m.

Two very big decisions at great cost to the tax payer, rushed through in secret the very first week of the current administration. Considering the writing off of the loan to begin with, the council notes that:

1. The prospect of winning the litigation against Rich Mix was very high, legal professionals advised a 70% chance of success.
2. Withdrawal of the claim means the council becomes liable for their legal costs, which in the report estimates at £160,000.
3. The drawn out litigation against Rich Mix has cost the council an estimated £180,000 in costs, which Rich Mix were initially liable for since the High Court dismissed their counter-claim.
4. There has been no evaluation of Rich Mix's financial stability to indicate that paying the debt of £850,000 would in fact lead to insolvency, and is only ever speculated as a possibility in the report.

Considering the allocation of a grant to the sum of £1,570,482, the council notes that:

1. After a preliminary hearing at the High Court on the 9th of July 2014, the counter-claim from Rich Mix for the section 106 money **was dismissed by the Court.**
2. Sustainability of the Rich Mix business has not been investigated, nor has it been acknowledged that it does not serve the community to allocate a grant to pay a debt, which is clearly what they intend, in part, to do with the money.
3. In the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, Mayor Biggs admitted that he had not viewed a business model of Rich Mix.
4. Mayor Biggs also acknowledges, as is stated in the report, that since Rich Mix opened it has received substantial amounts of public funding.
5. In the report it advises that Rich Mix has not been able to offer any significant additional benefits to justify further investment.

Further to these considerations, in the name of openness and transparency, this council notes that:

1. There exists a conflict of interest between the Labour group and Rich Mix, which makes the secrecy of this report, the writing off of debt and the allocation of more than £1.5m, highly controversial. Cllr Denise Jones, a board member for Rich Mix, attended the O&S meeting without declaring said interests and it is well known that previous Labour leader of this borough, Prof. Michael Keith, is the Chief of the board at Rich Mix.
2. In the short time given to draft this report, a consultation was made with the DCLG Commissioners who have provided a loophole for this decision to evade their scrutiny as they do not deem it be a “grant”.
3. The restriction of the report from public view and from elected members on the grounds of legal privilege is not relevant since the litigation has been discontinued.

This council resolves:

1. Publication of the report on which the decision by Mayor John Biggs is based
2. Terms and conditions for the grant:
 - a. ensuring the money is used to provide educational and inclusive services for the community.
 - b. ensuring the money is not used to pay off the debt.
 - c. quarterly reports and monitoring information of services delivered.
3. explanation be given in writing in relation to the grant evading scrutiny from the commissioners under section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, for the purposes of section 23 of that Act, disabled facilities grant, honouring a commitment to provide a substantial proportion of the grant to our residents living with a disability through targeted events, services and film.
4. Articulate and agree in consultation with the Council and local disability groups as to what specific provisions - in addition to any statutory responsibility placed on all publicly funded or subsidized organisations or commercial companies - will be provided to support the local disabled residents.
5. A full business case with a clear forecast and criteria to judge Rich Mix current situation, future performance and effectiveness be made available.
6. Clear details be made available as to which part is charitable and which part of business is for profit
7. How the salaries, management and administration is paid and what respective proportion is funded from commercial revenue and various funding streams.
8. What benefits will the community receive as a direct result of this funding involving nearly £2.5m of local residents money.
9. In terms of the business case what artistic benefits will it give local artists and how will the prime gallery space be utilised as a genuine gallery space.
10. As part of the business plan Richmix must commit to an Associated Artists Scheme where local artists and creatives can access small rent free work space for rotating periods to enable them to begin arts based business start ups
11. The business plan must also include Richmix to offer 10 Artistic and Gallery apprenticeships to local young people in Tower Hamlets.

12. Mayor Biggs to explain why despite his rhetoric about transparency and accountability, in terms of
13. Action, he took this critical and sensitive decision in secret, purged the report from elected Members, public.
14. And media and found a pseudo legal clause to rebrand this huge sum 'not a grant' to avoid being scrutinized by the Commissioners.
15. Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to add certain conditions in July at the Call-In meeting for the consideration of the Mayor. Now the decision has been confirmed, the Mayor to inform in writing if those recommendations has been adhered to.
16. As legal proceedings have been stopped as result of the decision, all information, court records, decisions and reports be made public immediately.

12.2 Motion in support of freedom of speech in Bangladesh

Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood

Seconder: Councillor Julia Dockerill

This council notes with concern that in October, 2015, Faisal Arefin Dipon, a publisher, was killed at his office in the city centre of Dhaka, just hours after another publisher and two secular writers were seriously injured in an attack.

The council also notes that during this year, other writers and bloggers were attacked on the following dates:

- August 7th, Niloy Neel was hacked to death at his home by a gang armed with Machetes.
- 12th May, Ananta Bijoy Das was attacked and killed in Sylhet.
- 30th March Washiqur Rahman was hacked to death near his home in Dhaka.
- 27th February, Aviit Roy was attacked and killed whilst walking home from a book fair, and that in the same attack Mr Roy's wife was injured.

These crimes are an affront to the right of free speech and are an assault on democracy itself.

This Council condemns these crimes, supports the tens of thousands who have protested on the streets of Bangladesh and sends our heartfelt condolences to the friends and families of the victims of these crimes.

12.3 Motion regarding the Civic Centre

Proposer: Mayor John Biggs

Secunder: Councillor Sirajul Islam

The Council notes that:

1. The lease on the current Mulberry Place Headquarters building expires in June 2020;
2. The facilities offered at Mulberry Place and associated Council offices including Albert Jacob House and John Onslow House are ageing and need to be updated
3. Mulberry Place is located at the extreme eastern end of the Borough
4. The review of options for a new civic centre undertaken since July 2015 has provided the opportunity to scrutinise proposals for a new civic headquarters as part of the former Royal London Hospital development and other options to determine which of these will offer best value for money, ensures a twenty first century working environment for staff delivering services to residents and provides a suitable location for the conduct of civic business
5. The retention of all existing One Stop Shops and Ideas Stores along with consideration of facilities in the Bethnal Green and Isle of Dogs areas of the Borough is an essential part of this proposal to ensure a strong local presence across all the geographical areas of the Borough.

Having considered the options, the Council welcomes the decision of the Mayor in Cabinet on 3 November 2015 to agree the former Royal London Hospital site in Whitechapel as the preferred location for the new civic centre and endorses the Mayor's subsequent decisions to enable the speediest implementation of this major project.

The Council further endorses the Mayor's proposal to establish a cross party reference group to keep the development of the civic centre under review and to provide regular updates to the Council.

12.4 Motion regarding junior doctors and the NHS

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

Seconder: Councillor Mahbub Alam

This council notes:

That the government is proposing to cut the pay of so-called junior doctors by up to 15 per cent.

That the definition of “junior” covers all doctors under consultant grade, meaning that the change affects those with up to eight years of experience on top of their five years of training.

That this cut is accompanied by substantial changes to the hours worked by doctors and the redefinition of “sociable hours” which means that the new contract include the change of “sociable working hours” from 7am-7pm Monday-Friday, to 7am-10pm Monday-Saturday, which means that hours for which junior doctors are paid a standard rate would increase from 60 to 90 a week.

That the number of doctors registering to work overseas has increased at an unprecedented rate since the government announced its proposed contract revisions.

That as a result of these changes the BMA is balloting doctors on strike action.

That the last time doctors went on strike was 1975, underlining the seriousness of the government’s attack on the hard-working, high-skilled medical professionals who are the backbone of the NHS.

That patients are putting themselves at risk by not attending hospital during the weekend in the mistaken belief – whipped up by the Conservative government – that there are no services available during these times.

That Conservative Party donors are handed NHS contracts worth £1.5 billion under the guise of health reforms. Circle Health landed £1.36billion worth of health service work after several of its investors gifted about £1.5million to the Conservatives: Care UK has contracts worth another £102.6million. Its chairman John Nash was made a peer after boosting Tory coffers by £247,250.

This council believes:

That the Tory attack on the pay and working conditions of doctors whose hard work and dedication save thousands of lives every year is inexcusable.

That the proposals endanger patient safety by requiring doctors to work longer hours.

That should doctors choose to strike, they should be supported by patients and members of the public who all have an interest in ensuring that the NHS continues to provide the best possible care.

That areas with high deprivation, where stress on health services is greatest, will suffer disproportionately from the proposed changes.

This council resolves:

To ask the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to write to the Secretary of State for Health, on cross party basis if possible, condemning the proposed changes and to work with health professionals in the borough to resist their implementation.

12.5 Motion regarding the experimental borough wide 20mph speed limit

Proposer: Councillor Chris Chapman

Secunder: Councillor Peter Golds

This Council notes the requirement to make roads safer for all road users.

The council further notes that for the borough wide 20mph speed limit to be effective, then it must be achieved with the compliance of road users and cannot be enforced on them especially when the police are unable or unwilling to enforce the limit.

The council notes that in introducing the 20mph speed limit it stated:-

'Successful 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits should be self-enforcing'

However, the flawed process whereby the 20mph limit was introduced in Tower Hamlets makes self-enforcement improbable.

Residents do not feel that they were involved and there is already evidence that there is little respect regarding the way in which the borough wide 20mph limit has been implemented, not least as it was one of the final decisions of the former, discredited Mayoral administration.

There are already local concerns as residents have observed police vehicles routinely exceeding the speed limit whilst knowing that ambulances on emergency calls have to drive slowly because of this change does not inspire confidence.

The result is that whilst law-abiding citizens drive more slowly, others do not.

Actual road experience suggests that there is now a greater gap between the fastest and slowest vehicles on the road, more overtaking of vehicles and vehicles are slowing down before reaching the borough's few speed cameras which are currently the only methods of enforcing the speed limit. None of these changes improve safety and overtaking makes minor roads in particular more dangerous.

In 2014 when Tower Hamlets Council consulted on implementing a borough wide 20mph limit there were just 171 responses. It should be noted that those consulted by the former administration did not include elected ward councillors. The result was;

For a borough wide 20mph speed limit – 137

Against the limit – 23

Neutral – 11 people

This figure includes 103 responses (60%) organised by Tower Hamlets Wheelers (the local branch of the London Cycling Campaign) through an automated form on their website.

The council notes that according to the 2011 census there were 43,589 cars and vans owned by residents of the borough and vehicles per household range from 32% in Spitalfields and Banglatown to 54% in St Katharines and Wapping.

8,112 residents travelled to work by bicycle.

137 For responses represents 0.31% of the people with a car or 0.05% of the total population of the Borough.

The council believes that this is an inadequate response on which to design policy and to enforce changes on 43,589 overwhelmingly law abiding road users.

The council believes that if a borough wide 20mph limit is to be introduced beyond the eighteen month experiment as at present, then it must have credibility.

This Council requests the mayor to consider and report back to the council, the following;

1. That a decision on whether to end or continue the 20mph speed limit is taken via a resident's consultation and / or referendum.
2. That this consultation should take place during the spring of 2016, a year after the scheme was first implemented so that a final decision can be made before the end of the 18 month trial in October 2016.
3. That the consultation should be more sophisticated than a simple yes or no question and should seek provide residents with more options about what speeds they think appropriate in different areas and different road types.
4. That the process by which this consultation takes place and the questions asked should be discussed in Council in advance.
5. That the Council seek to use this opportunity to fully engage with residents and properly engage with them. This Council in the past has had a lamentable record on public engagement, this is an opportunity to engage with and empower residents to make a major decision. It would therefore greatly assist with the Councils transparency agenda.
6. The Council should seek to engage more than the 171 people who responded to the first consultation and should aspire to engaging with at least 10,000 residents (25% of road users or less than 4% of total residents) if this limit is to have any credibility.

The council believes that roads are safer when road users use roads more safely. A borough wide 20mph limit will only work when the majority of road users respect the process by which the decision is reached.

Therefore, the Council calls on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider these matters when undertaking their review.

12.6 Motion regarding the protection of Tower Hamlets Heritage and Community Assets

Proposer: Councillor Andrew Cregan

Seconded: Councillor Joshua Peck

This Council notes:

- There is a rich variety of historic buildings in our Borough that add immense value to our community
- That Tower Hamlets' "Local List" was compiled in 1973, alongside the Borough's Statutory List
- That although it has been added to over the years, the Council's Local List is not a complete list of all non-designated heritage assets in the Borough
- Heritage and community assets, in particular pubs, play an important role in our Borough, helping to provide local character, strengthen social networks, contribute to the local economy and provide an important focal point for local communities – hosting events, clubs and meetings that are necessary for community cohesion
- Once heritage and community assets are gone it is impossible to bring them back

This Council believes that:

- The protection of heritage and community assets must be a core consideration in the borough's approach to regeneration and development
- Developers should consult with local heritage and conservation groups early enough in the stages of a planning application to shape those applications appropriately
- Tower Hamlets would benefit from a review of policies to mitigate against harm to historic fabric by developers, before planning applications reach the Committee stage
- Soaring property prices and gaps in planning law mean that many local heritage and community assets can easily be turned into a supermarket, flats or even demolished
- Heritage and community assets must be protected from wilful neglect and property speculation

This Council resolves:

- To revise the Local List in its entirety as soon as possible, to include all non-designated heritage assets and historic public houses
- To establish a process whereby local residents can make additions to the

Local List easily

- To create a local “Heritage at Risk Register” incorporating all at risk buildings on the Local List
- To take a proactive stance in monitoring the condition of historic local buildings on a local “Heritage at Risk Register” through the use of notices issued by the Planning Enforcement Team
- To protect community assets under threat from change of use by “Article 4 Directions”
- To implement a specific pub protection policy to be incorporated into the Local Plan as well as a separate policy to enhance community infrastructure

12.7 Motion regarding new civic engagement strategy

Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Seconded: Councillor Maium Miah

This council notes:

That Tower Hamlets Council undertakes a wide variety of consultations, engagement exercises and reviews involving residents and stakeholders.

That most of these activities are well planned and officers generally work hard to make these exercises outcome-oriented and successful however there is a potential for improvement.

That, over the recent years, great strides have been made in terms of improvements but there seem to be still some existence of overlapping activities, resulting in waste of resources, working in silos, lack of effectiveness and duplication of efforts, as well as, lack of joined-up approach.

That recent interim analysis of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Transparency Commission Survey relating to responses from Tower Hamlets residents (albeit, not precisely a statistically representative sample, with potential risks of usual suspects or those with a particular agenda, which can be considered in weighing the evidence and context in the wash up) - must be taken into account and given serious consideration by Mayor Biggs in moving forward and in order to further improve our civic participation, democratic and partnership engagement structure and practices.

This council resolves:

That in the spirit of working together for the benefit of residents of Tower Hamlets, Tower Hamlets Independent Group proposes that the Council should develop a 'new Civic Engagement Strategy' with transparency, accountability and genuine desire to listen to residents and other stakeholders at the heart of its organisational ethos, work and culture. This should be done on cross-party basis to make it more effective and to develop 'buy-in' from all concerned.

That Tower Hamlets Independent Group, in the spirit of cross-party working and kinder politics, would like to record our constructive suggestions in developing a new 'Civic Engagement Strategy' taking into account the points highlighted above and streamlining the overall activities, without any impact

On the frontline services or jobs. This should also consider the following:

That it must be open to all residents, members, staff, partners, trade unions and stakeholders - with clear information, impact and explanation - for comments, suggestions and discussion, supplemented with an awareness and publicity campaign with ample time and options to respond through a variety of means;

That the Unison presentation and the Unite response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5th October 2015 in relation to transparency, accountability and engagement must be taken on board in letter and spirit;

That the new strategy should use all strands of engagement avenues - including but not exclusively online - in order to ensure fair access to and opportunities for all; and

That constructive suggestions, including this motion, about our new proposed 'Civic Engagement Strategy' be sent to relevant officers, some of which have already been touched upon in our OSTC response to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Mayor to consider, enact and incorporate.

12.8 Motion regarding Development on the Isle of Dogs

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor Andrew Wood

This council notes:

- The south-east of the borough is on the verge of becoming Europe's version of Hong Kong, with a higher population density than the real thing.
- That the GLA Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar is an important component of this work but there are many other elements of the Council's responsibilities, which will need to be adapted to suit the new emerging local conditions.
- Development in the area exceeds the London Plan maximum density recommendations by a factor of two (while the London Plan recommends a maximum of 405 units per hectare in an area with excellent transport connections, the average of the last thirteen approved applications in the area equal 900 units per hectare).

This council further notes:

That The London Plan recommends a minimum of 10,000 homes on the Isle of Dogs.

- That nevertheless current estimates suggest approximately 34,000 homes are in the process of being delivered or have been since 2011.
- The GLA 'City in the East' document indicate that they believe 30,000 homes are expected to be delivered on the Isle of Dogs along with more in Blackwall. The GLA document also indicates that the Canary Wharf workforce will double in size as another 110,000 workers fill the new office buildings with planning approval or under construction.

This council notes the following issues:

As an example of the issues that need to be resolved, three of the new buildings planned in the area require refuse trucks to drive underground to pick up waste.

Will this be included in the new refuse contract and what will be the cost implications?

There remain questions as to the public health implications of thousands of Children living in very tall tower blocks with limited access to parks and open spaces

It is known that across Tower Hamlets approximately 45% of households have access to a car but with most new developments being car free or with less than 10% car parking provision how will this operate when families need cars to transport children and elderly relatives?

How will the police and other authorities handle actual and expected anti-social behaviour on what will be the most densely populated streets in London with no centrally controlled CCTV cameras

Will there be Section 106 provision for a new police station to cope with this increase?

How will residents, current and future, be assured that the mobile and fixed broadband networks are able to cope with this scale of development?

What assurances will be given to ensure that there is adequate water supply?

What provision will be made for an ageing population?

How will public realm receive adequate provision when open space will be the responsibility and under the control of many different developers?

This council believes:

That the answers to these and other questions require a unique degree of co-ordination across the Council and its stakeholders.

- That resolving these issues will also require learning lessons from other dense parts of the world such as Hong Kong and may well require Council staff to learn first-hand how to adapt existing Tower Hamlets policies to this new environment.
- That the council needs to start planning for this level of change sooner rather than later, and that the sooner it does so the smoother and more efficiently it will adapt itself to serving this new environment.

This council resolves:

That the Mayor be requested to create a special Council taskforce to co-ordinate across all Council departments & external stakeholders.

12.9 Motion regarding the Housing and Planning Bill

Proposer: Councillor Rachel Blake

Seconder: Councillor Amina Ali

This Council notes that:

1. The Government published a Housing and Planning Bill for First reading on 13 October 2015.
2. The second reading took place on the 2 November 2015 and that the Bill was carried at its second reading in Parliament.
3. The Bill is now at Committee Stage.
4. The Bill includes:
 - a. Introduction of a General Duty to promote Starter Homes
 - b. Measures to force Councils to sell high value council homes
 - c. Measures to require higher earners to pay higher rents and for the increased income to be paid to the Secretary of State
 - d. Measures to implement the Right to Buy for Housing Association Tenants through a on a voluntary basis.
5. That Cllr Philippa Roe, Conservative Leader of Westminster Council, has said “it is absolutely vital that the proceeds of right-to-buy from London are kept in London.” (<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/senior-tory-says-right-to-buy-could-wipe-out-swathes-of-social-housing-10426462.html>)
6. Rushanara Ali MP and Jim Fitzpatrick MP voted against the Bill at the second reading.
7. Zac Goldsmith MP, in the House of Commons on Monday 2nd November, said:
 - “the gap between supply and demand remains very wide, and without radical action, it will grow wider still, further pricing Londoners out of their own city”
 - “closing the gap between supply and demand, therefore, is the absolute priority”
 - “council homes in London are far more valuable than they are elsewhere, and without a change we will see a disproportionate flow of resources out of London”
 - “the amendment that I intend to table after today’s debate will ask for a binding guarantee that London will see a net gain in affordable housing as a consequence of this policy—a guarantee that London will see, in addition to the replaced housing association homes, at least two low-cost homes

built for every single high-value home sold”

- “the bottom line is that we are going to have to use every single available lever to deliver affordable homes at all incomes”

8. The Mayor in Cabinet in September 2015 approved the development of new affordable homes

This Council believes:

1. London’s successful future is threatened without sufficient supply of genuinely affordable homes
2. Tower Hamlets has historically provided a vital role for supplying homes for households on low incomes who play a vital role in London’s economy and that role is under threat.
3. This Bill will have a severe detrimental effect on the ability of LB Tower Hamlets to address housing need and demand in Tower Hamlets.
4. This Bill will force many households to leave the borough as they will no longer be able to afford to live in Tower Hamlets.
5. This Bill will undermine the mixed and diverse communities that we are proud to be part of in Tower Hamlets.
6. There is no provision within the Bill to ensure that the proceeds from the Right to Buy of Housing Association homes or from the forced sale of Council homes will stay within Tower Hamlets.

This Council calls on:

1. The Mayor to submit evidence to the committee to make the case for amendments to the Bill to ensure London’s future success
2. The Mayor and all councillors actively campaign to highlight the disastrous consequences of this Bill

12.10 Motion regarding the Trade Union Bill

Proposer: Councillor Clare Harrison

Seconder: Councillor Rachael Saunders

This Council notes that:

1. In February 2015 the United Nations agency, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), reaffirmed its belief that 'without protecting a right to strike, Freedom of Association, in particular the right to organise activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers' interests, cannot be fully realised.'
2. In July 2015 the Conservative government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions and their members to make it harder to win ballots for industrial action. This will only be lawful if there is a 50% turnout among trade union members entitled to vote in addition to a simple majority voting for industrial action.
3. The Conservatives seek a further requirement for those working in 'important public services' to secure the support of 40% of all trade union members. Non-voters will be counted as 'against' industrial action which is contrary to ILO guidance. This means that on a 50% turnout, 80% will have to vote for industrial action for it to be lawful in many public services.
4. No such thresholds apply to elections in local government, for police and crime commissioners, or in European or Westminster elections.
5. The government has refused the request of trade unions to make electronic balloting legally permissible and increase turnout this way.

This Council further notes that:

1. The proposed Conservative legislation will also introduce greater restrictions for picketing.
2. These include requirements on unions to inform the police of the name of a picket supervisor and ensure they have a letter of authorisation that they must be required to carry, inform the police of how many members will be expected to attend a picket line and what banners or materials will be used as well as to notify the police of details of how trade unions intend to use social media during a dispute.
3. The Conservative government wants to remove the ban for employers to employ agency workers during a period of lawful industrial action.
4. The government wants to grant Ministers the power to reduce the amount of facilities time agreed by employers and the workforce which is in place to ensure adequate workplace representation.

5. Trade unions take industrial action for a wide range of reasons including defending wages and pensions, conditions at work as well as health and safety.

This Council believes that:

1. The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights which should be respected in a free and democratic society.
2. The Conservative government's bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions to trade union members.
3. Workplace representation ensures access to justice and has benefits across whole organisations.
4. The government's Trade Union Bill is part of a disturbing trend to erode civil liberties and inhibit the right to speak out or protest against the government.
5. The Conservative government's Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider civil society.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the council's opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations.
2. Support the TUC and civil liberties groups in campaigning to defend the right to strike and oppose the Trade Union Bill.
3. Continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.

12.11 Motion regarding Mainstream Grants and Commissioners

Proposer: Councillor Rachael Saunders

Secunder: Councillor Danny Hassell

This Council notes:

1. The decision of Department for Communities and Local Government to appoint Commissioners to exercise and oversee certain executive functions within the council, following serious governance concerns identified under the previous administration.
2. The Mayor's commitment to open and transparent decision making
3. That the role of the commissioners is due to the previous mayor's failures and that we need to work towards an exit of the commissioners and the reassertion of democratic decision making.
4. The letter from the Department of Communities and Local Government (dated 23rd October 2015) welcoming progress against directions.
5. That the Best Value Action Plan six month progress report on performance showed that 91% of the items identified have been completed or are due to be completed in line with the targets set.
6. That as a result of this, DCLG wrote to confirm that the 6th May Directions would lapse on the 31st October.
7. That the commissioners no longer have the power to directly run the council, but will remain to carry out some functions.
8. The previous mayor and Tower Hamlets First failed to co-operate with the process – the Labour Group has and will continue to take a more active role in grants decisions.
9. The importance of scrutiny of the executive's grants decisions.
10. Recent decisions made on Mainstream Grants (MSG) made by the Commissioners for 2015-2018
11. There were over 370 applications for MSG, with £9.1m in funding allocated to 131 projects in the borough
12. The importance of a strong, open, honest and supportive relationship with local third sector organisations.
13. A number of Labour and Conservative councillors attended the Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting for grant funding allocations, to highlight a number of excellent local organisations who were not recommended for funding.

This Council believes:

1. There was a severe lack of transparency and accountability regarding decisions on grant making under the previous administration.
2. There was a lack of clear and consistent benchmarking, objectives and auditing for grant funding under the previous administration
3. As a result the former Mayor undermined the process which led, with other governance failures, to the appointment of Commissioners
4. There is a clear role for elected members in informing the grant making process and understanding local need, but that this must be done within a clear framework to ensure transparency, scrutiny and accountability
5. The mainstream grants process has a key role in supporting the excellent work of many local organisations
6. There is a need to establish a fair process for grant funding, which reflects local need of communities across the borough and maintains the confidence of local residents

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Mayor to establish a fair, transparent and robust process for future grant funding so that residents, voluntary organisations and other relevant authorities can be satisfied that decisions on grant funding can be determined by the council and its elected members.
2. To call on the Mayor to introduce an effective standing scrutiny mechanism
3. To call on the Executive to do everything within its power to ensure a fair process for grants funding and to work with the CVS to support organisations in accessing further funding.