

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2017

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

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs	Councillor Danny Hassell
Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Abjol Miah
Councillor Mahbub Alam	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Shah Alam	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Md. Maium Miah
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Chris Chapman	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Dave Chesterton	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Andrew Cregan	Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor Julia Dockerill	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Andrew Wood
Councillor Clare Harrison	

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed 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. 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 3 – Minutes.
- Item 4 – Announcements.
- Item 5.1 – Petition regarding Speed Humps at Stainsby Road.
- Item 5.2 – Petition regarding Island Health Trust.
- Item 12.1 – Motion regarding Island Health Trust.
- Item 5.3 – Petition regarding Council Tax Reduction.

- Item 9. 1 - Report of Cabinet: Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Item 6 – Public Questions.
- Item 7 – Mayor’s Report.
- Item 13.1 – Urgent motion regarding the proposed change of Osmani School name.
- Item 8 – Members Questions.
- Item 9.2 - Report of Cabinet: Late Night Levy.
- Item 11.1 – Appointment of Independent Co-opted Member.
- Item 11.2 – Appointment of Co-Opted Members .
- Item 12.4 – Motion regarding Government’s failure to tackle the social care crisis.

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs.
- Councillor Rachel Blake.
- Councillor Shafiqul Haque.

- Councillor M. Abdul Mukit.
- Councillor Oliur Rahman.
- Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were made.

Councillor Peter Golds declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5.2 - Petition relating to Island Health Trust. This was on the basis that the Councillor was a patient at the Island Health Centre and was a member of the Patients Panel.

3. MINUTES

Councillor Mahbub Alam **moved** and Councillor Gulam Robbani **seconded** an amendment to the minutes to request that a statement detailing the reasons for the Independent Group's walk-out of the 21 September 2016 Council meeting be attached to the minutes.

The amendment was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

RESOLVED:

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

The Speaker of the Council congratulated Councillor Amy Whitelock-Gibbs on the birth of her baby boy, Felix. The Council passed on their best wishes to the whole family. The Speaker also congratulated Councillor Julia Dockerill on her recent engagement.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition relating to Speed Humps at Stainsby Road

Richard Caley addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He advised the Council had commissioned the Bartlett Park Master plan which included an intention to close the junction of Cottall Street with Upper North Street in the near future which would in turn reduce the amount of traffic on Stainsby Road and improve the situation. Councillor Miah also advised he had instructed officers

to develop a scheme for the introduction of speed humps in Stainsby Road and issue this scheme for public consultation by the end of February.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

5.2 Petition relating to Island Health Trust

Doris Joyce Penn and Adam Allnutt addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. The Mayor advised that he had met with the CCG and Trust members to seek to address this issue. The Trust had indicated that it was willing to listen to and act on some of the concerns. He hoped to continue to engage with the Trust to ensure that these developments benefit local people and that the local assets were protected. He also advised of specific concerns with the Trust's accounts, which he hoped also to raise with the Charity Commission.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director Health Adults and Community, for a written response within 28 days.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Dave Chesterton **moved** and Councillor Rajib Ahmed **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that Item 12.9 Motion regarding the Island Health Trust be taken as the next item of business. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**."

5.3 Petition relating to Council Tax reduction

The petitioners did not wish to present their petition and so it was referred to the Corporate Director for a written response.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Councillor Helal Uddin **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that Item 9.1 Report of Cabinet – Council Tax Reduction Scheme be taken as the next item of business. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**."

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The following question followed by a supplementary question was put and was responded to by the relevant Executive Member:-

6.2 Question from Ahmed Hussain

The council certainly has a duty to collect its taxes & fees either due or unpaid. But is it right to use the council's "Bailiffs" and "Court Orders" inappropriately, too early too soon; if not then why is this council using these resources to often to early?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources

Clearly the Council has a statutory responsibility to collect council tax and there is a statutory process that we need to follow in doing that and I am assured that the use of enforcement agents or bailiffs is only ever taken as a last resort, when all the other options that we have tried to use in order to collect that money have failed. Where we have discretion about the level of court costs enforced and we exercise that discretion and arrangements are kept after the issue of a Liability Order Notice, so we are seeking to increasingly waive court costs to help minimise the impact of the charges made to those who owe the Council money. So I think we do exercise the responsibilities that we have in a way that is humane and takes into account the circumstances of people, but also allows us to do our statutory role in collecting that money which is clearly in the interest of residents of this Council. We need to maximise the council tax that is due to the Council in order to provide the services that we are expected to.

Supplementary question from Ahmed Hussain

I know that you can't comment on individual cases, but these certain cases have been copied in with the Mayor and I will just give you this as an example and I hope you take it as an example which is affecting in a broader context the residents of Tower Hamlets. I have two examples here, one whereby the resident actually being pursued for council tax, the actual person who was liable admitted to it and said he will pay up, but the Council did not acknowledge that and proceed with the landlord and while the landlord was trying to have a meeting with the officers instead of giving a meeting they sent in the bailiffs, despite when they asked "don't send the bailiffs we've got mental health patients in the house it will cause a lot of stress", still they did so and they took the money, but at no point did they say they would not going to pay it they wanted to sit down and have a chat and tease out where the problem was. The second one is a bit more unique, whereby someone, they charge rate to a businessman and it was found that he was wrongly charged and the Council admitted it. But following that they already started the court procedure and now they are pursuing the £200 for the court procedure and they sent out for the bailiffs, they sent a letter saying that if you don't pay this we will send the bailiffs, so the person paid up. What I am trying to get here is that none of these people said they don't want to pay, they only wanted to sit down with an officer and tweak out where the problems is see where the

tease are and if they have to pay they have to pay, if they don't have to pay they don't have to pay. So can you assure us that the Council officers are going to sit down, we did try on several occasions to sit down with the Council, I have got a lot of emails and correspondence to show you, but they would not recognise that they would not even say yes or no we can't sit down, they would just keep on saying pay this, pay this, pay this. Why is it so difficult for Council officers to sit down with the residents? Can they not do that?

Councillor David Edgar's response to supplementary question

I would certainly hope that where it is appropriate for us to sit down with residents and talk about a payment plan then that is something that we would do. As you say you can't name particular individuals here, but I am clearly happy for you to contact me outside of this meeting and for me to get the details of the particular instances. Maybe they are ones where, in the Council's view, we have a different account and we did what we needed to do, but they may be examples of failings in the process that we normally have, so I am interested in finding out about the individual cases and maybe there are things that we could learn or things that we should have done differently there, but I would need to look at them in detail. So if you are happy to share those details subsequently then I would be happy to consider them, but I would like to say that the Council has both an obligation to its council tax payers and others to maximise the income, it tries to do that I think in a humane way and I am sure that it generally succeeds, and alongside the work that it does in collecting it also makes sure that there is advice given to people about how they can maximise their income, how they can manage debts and the Council's approach is, I think a balanced one where we both try to maximise the income, but also support people when they need support. But do send me the particular cases and I am very happy to sit down and have this conversation about them and see if there are things that we should have done differently or things we can learn.

Question 6.1 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. A Written response would be provided to the question.

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

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

When the Mayor had completed his report and at the invitation of the Speaker the leaders of the Conservative Group, Independent Group and the People's Alliance of Tower Hamlets responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Procedural Motion

Councillor David Edgar **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 proposed change of

Osmani School name to be considered". The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The following questions and in each case supplementary questions were put (except where indicated) and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member:-

8.1 Question from Councillor Clare Harrison

Will the Mayor confirm that, contrary to some opposition scaremongering, he will not be recommending removing the 100% Council Tax Reduction Scheme support unlike many other boroughs?

Response of Mayor John Biggs

I am happy to confirm that, as has already been debated. I think it is worth noting that under my predecessor over £100 million pounds worth of savings were taken out of the Council's budget, they were done progressively by hollowing out centres and services. What we are doing is creating a solid way forward, but within that we have the headroom in our budget to continue to support people on the lowest incomes and we are very committed as a Labour group to tackling the problems of poverty and exclusion in our community, both by addressing people's needs for support with their incomes, but also by supporting people in improving their circumstances in getting into work. I think that is progressive. I was previously compared to Tony Blair. I don't particularly like being compared to Tony Blair, but I think he did teach us a number of things about progression and about how we support our communities and I am proud that he did that.

No supplementary question from Councillor Clare Harrison

8.3 Question from Councillor Andrew Cregan

Smarter Streets is being trialled in three wards - Bromley North, Island Gardens and Stepney Green – and enables residents to very easily report litter and fly-tipping using their smart phones. Are there any early indications about the success of the trial scheme?

Response of Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment

As part of our ongoing strategy to deal with littering a fly-tipping we are incorporating technology as a way to make it easier to report. Smart Streets is still in its early stages, the pilot scheme across the three wards was fully initiated and set for public use in September 2016. We had an advertising push in December, encompassed a range of channels, including a household flyer distribution, social media, East London Advertiser and Council internet/intranet. Further promotion materials are set to go out until February 2017. Smart Street is in its early stages, we have not seen the uptake we

would have liked by now but this is still very much a trial stage. We are reviewing a change in strategy to amplify the use and benefits of the scheme to channel direct delivery, including current location and implementing in high footfall areas.

No supplementary question from Councillor Andrew Cregan

8.4 Question from Councillor Julia Dockerill

Is the Mayor aware that when neighbouring Newham Council sought to set up a new free school without a proper, open competition, it ended up costing three council officers their jobs after they effectively broke the law?

What assurances can the Mayor provide councillors that Tower Hamlets will be running an open, fair and compliant tendering process for the London Dock and Westferry free school sites?

Response of Mayor John Biggs

I am very happy to confirm that our officers will act in total compliance with the law. As you know there are a number of free school sites, particularly the two secondary school sites that we have been discussing, the lead member and our officers and we will start with the presumption, that I think is called the free school presumption, is followed, which means that there is a competitive process. I am very happy to work with Council Dockerill particularly in relation to the school in Wapping as I will with Councillor Jones.

Supplementary question from Councillor Julia Dockerill

In his report to Council, the Mayor advised that he has been holding discussions with the planned arrival of the new secondaries, and 'do we need them?' he asks. What is his answer and if he has concerns about demand for places is it wise to exclude girls from admissions by having gender segregated education on the London Dock site, which is apparently being promoted in demand of parents north of The Highway, but it is certainly not what parents south of The Highway want.

Mayor John Biggs' response to supplementary question

I am very clear that we should follow the proper process and I am sure that my lead member wants to make sure this happens as well. I know there is a lot of pressure for a mixed school on the Wapping site. The reason I raised this question about whether we want the school is because the government has now announced that we are going to have a new sixth form entry secondary school on the Commercial Road, which we didn't know anything about until the press statement came out, in the former London College furniture site and that sort of announcement by government, of free schools plonking out of thin air, does rather disrupt our planning process and we need to look closely at the impact that that has as well, but I absolutely support the principle that the people of Wapping should have access to a school that represents their desires, but we have to balance that against the desires of

other people and the fact that the majority of school kids who will go to that school will come from north of The Highway as well, but yes, I like mixed schools and I hope that it will be a mixed school.

8.5 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin

The Tower Hamlets Education Partnership launched in late September this year. What work has been undertaken by the Partnership since the formal launch – and what is planned for the near future?

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

85% of Tower Hamlets Council schools are now full members of the partnership, 88 of 103 schools. Member schools include nursery, primary and secondary schools special schools academies and three of the four Teaching Alliance schools in the borough. There is also a diverse range of associate members, other organisations other than schools who want to work closely with our schools on education related works. A diverse range of associate members including, Aldgate and All Hallows Foundation, Bow Arts, Queen Mary University, Spitalfields Small Business Association. A longer list of excellent organisations that I don't necessarily need to read out.

Cath Smith who is the head teacher of Bow School began a one year secondment part-time as executive director in September 2016. Ian Jones who is the head at Mary Richardson primary school is our primary advisor working one day a week. There is an interim board chaired by Christine Gilbert with excellent people on it, but we need to increase the diversity of the leadership of the organisation. A new board is due to be appointed at the AGM in March 2017. The organisation is being established with Companies House and then as a charity, as you would expect, and the offer to schools has just been circulated and I can tell you more about that if you like.

No supplementary question from Councillor Helal Uddin

8.6 Question from Councillor Abdul Asad

Could the Mayor provide an update on what actions have been taken to keep Old Ford Housing a locally based Housing Provider as agreed in the original transfer documents?

Response of Mayor John Biggs

I am anxious that the residents of Bow in particular, but Old Ford covers other parts of the borough as well, should receive a service that is locally based and is accountable to them. I don't have absolute power in this as I don't over a number of other matters, for example the naming of schools and so on, I have had a number of meetings with local Councillors, with chief executives of both Circle and Affinity Sutton, the chief executive of which is now the chief exec of Clarion. I also met with the directors of Old Ford Housing Association, which still legally exists, and there have been a number of conversations about how

we might resolve this and I am happy to undertake to report back to you about what progress we make with that. Can I also thank the local Councillors for the very active role in supporting residents off the estate, particularly in Bow, who are very anxious about the performance. The underlying problem with the performance of Circle has been a great concern and I am pleased that there seems to be some beginnings of a sign that that might be improving under Clarion, but I think this story is well from over.

Supplementary question from Councillor Abdul Asad

The Mayor is very experienced and you probably were involved in helping setting up Old Ford housing, maybe there is something under the Tory government Housing Action Trust, but I would be very keen to have the reports when you have your meetings with them.

Mayor John Biggs' response to supplementary question

I note that Chair. I don't think I need to respond.

8.7 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell

Can the Mayor or portfolio holder provide an update on plans to bring Old Flo back to the borough?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Culture

Unlike the previous administration, we value this borough's culture and heritage and don't just see it as a cash cow to be melted down for cash. That is why we took the decision to save Old Flo and to return her to her rightful place in the borough. We don't just want to return this artwork to its spiritual home, we want Old Flo to play a vital role in the cultural make-up of the borough, to be a focal point for schools and educators, and to be a visitor attraction that adds to Tower Hamlets already enviable reputation as a creative borough. We are currently in the process of identifying a suitable organisation to host the artwork and provide a safe and accessible local home for 'Old Flo', which will allow the residents to enjoy this historic piece of local art without the financial liability to the borough.

Supplementary question from Councillor Danny Hassell

Does the lead member agree that the decision of the previous administration and many members opposite to flog this art represents not only their callous disregard for the value of public art, but also would have put at risk funding for art projects in our borough, given that other councils when selling such works of art have had their grants cut and have been essentially blacklisted by the Arts Council and other organisations?

Councillor Asma Begum's response to supplementary question

Absolutely. We want to enrich the lives of our residents and inspire the creative talents of our young people in particular I am proud that we continue

to fund a range of events which celebrate the diversity of the community and support organisations which in turn enhance the lives and wellbeing of our residents and help our creative industries to thrive.

8.8 Question from Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Does the Mayor believe that dealing with the drugs and drug-related crimes in Tower Hamlets - which links to vicious cycle of poverty, lack of social mobility, abuse, dependence, self-harm - is one of his priorities?

Response of Councillor Shiria Khatun, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety

Tackling drug-related crime is a top priority of our Mayor, John Biggs and of our administration and we've always been very clear on the need to be tough on drug crime, and supportive of people who need treatment for substance misuse. The Substance Misuse Strategy was agreed by Council in September. I know Cllr Ahmed and his group colleagues had walked out of the meeting before we had discussed the report, but I'd very happy to go over the Strategy with him in more detail. We work very closely with the police to tackle drug dealing in the borough and we arrest more drug dealers in Tower Hamlets than in any other borough. We are also soon to be part of the Home Office Heroin and Crack Action Area pilot.

However, we cannot underestimate the pressures the police face. The Conservative Government have made huge cuts to policing budgets. As you know, Tower Hamlets Council funds the Partnership Task Force.

I would also note the Mayor of London's excellent announcement that every ward in the borough is to be given a second dedicated neighbourhood police officer.

We now have the Community Safety Plan and the Substance Misuse Strategy in place. The strategy is very clear – in order to limit the impact of substance misuse, we need to support those experiencing substance misuse, facilitate access to treatment, and restrict the supply of drugs.

Supplementary question from Councillor Ohid Ahmed

A few weeks ago, Tower Hamlets was declared to have one of the worst drug related problems in the entire UK, based on people dying or being taken to hospital. There were 682 people admitted to hospital last year, 2015/16, because of drugs problems. There were 35 people who died because of drug problems. 1,513 crimes committed in the last 12 months. You already mentioned that this is a drug heaven. There were 37,625 drug seizures made, which is the highest of any authority in this country. My question is straightforward, Mr Mayor, do you actually take this drug problem seriously and if you do are you going to put any money into it?

Councillor Shiria Khatun's response to supplementary question

I did not say that Tower Hamlets was a drug heaven, what I actually said was we are also seem to be part of the Home Office Heroin and Crack Action Area pilot which means more financial support to continue the good work that we are doing in order to get people off of drugs. One of the other things I would like to mention, Councillor Ahmed rightly so talked about drugs related issues, however the Substance Misuse Strategy that was agreed at Full Council in September, unfortunately everyone there apart from the Tories walked out of that Council meeting. The strategy is very in depth and has three strands and if anybody is interested to talk about the strategy or know more about it then I am more than willing to spend time going through the strategy.

8.9 Question from Councillor Amina Ali

Shelter estimated that over the Christmas period, 120,000 children were homeless. This figure is up two-thirds since 2010. What action is the Council taking to house homeless families?

Response of Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Performance

Council members will be aware of the huge progress on bed and breakfast accommodation that we have made since Mayor Biggs was elected. We were shocked to find that under the previous administration over 230 households had been in B&B for longer than six weeks, and are proud that we have reduced that number to zero. We may be the only borough to be statutorily compliant. Indeed by Christmas we had moved almost every single family out of Bed & Breakfast accommodation and into self-contained temporary accommodation. However the ongoing housing crisis means that the total numbers of households in temporary accommodation remains high at over 2,100. The only solution to this is to build more homes, and in particular council homes, which is the major priority of our new housing strategy.

Supplementary question from Councillor Amina Ali

Does the cabinet member believe the Tories housing and planning act will make it easier or harder for us to reduce the affliction of homelessness in our borough?

Councillor Sirajul Islam's response to supplementary question

Unsurprisingly, given what I have said in this Council Chamber before on this subject, I think it will undoubtedly make it harder. While I welcome the Government's U-turn on pay to stay, there are still incredibly damaging measures in the Act, including the forced sell off of much needed social housing, and the perverse approach to new affordable housing through starter homes. More importantly the Act does not help us with funding for the land, bricks, and mortar we need to build council homes. The Act neither says anything about controlling private sector rent, whilst this is one of the main causes of increased homelessness.

8.10 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

Concerns have been raised by residents of Manchester Road as to vibration from traffic which is causing serious problems to residential housing. Thames Water recently completed repairs to Manchester Road at the Manchester Grove intersection; however the road surface was left uneven on completion.

Thames Water say the repair was signed off by Tower Hamlets Council. The uneven surface is now causing vibration issues in an area with many known water breaks and is affecting nearby houses. In this situation who takes responsibility, Thames Water or Tower Hamlets Council for signing off the completed road repair?

Response of Mayor John Biggs

We have had a couple of meetings with Isle of Dogs Councillors from all parties to discuss these issues, I take it very seriously. The Council formally signs things off under the Street Work Act, but I am more than happy to arrange a visit with Councillor Golds and officers to see this site. I am aware that particularly when a road reinstatement is near to older properties, the vibration and impact can be quite severe, so very happy to do that as a priority.

Supplementary question from Councillor Peter Golds

There is a situation of the road table near Island Gardens Station, where as the buses come off, particularly those going along Manchester Road to Westferry Road, as they come off the bang is such that you could stand in several of the cottage houses on the Chapel House estate and feel the bump, actually stand inside and feel the bump. On two of them I have drawn attention to Council officers of cracks in the wall and all I get is saying that Council officers visiting the premises have measured the bump and there isn't a bump. In fact if they actually went inside the houses, and all the residents there are quite happy to invite them in, and feel the bumps and see the cracks and I wonder if you could use your good officers to ensure that takes place.

Mayor John Biggs' response to supplementary question

I am more than happy to do that and while I am on my feet, I can also address the responsibility members have to convey information, and I want our member support service and our officers to be responsive to local issues such as this and I am happy to discuss it with Councillor Golds outside the meeting. I think that members also have a responsibility to brief their residents accurately on proposals and I just want to refute the suggestion that I want to chop down trees *en masse* and build massive cycle superhighways on Manchester Road either. I think we all agree that we want to provide a safe environment on the Isle of Dogs, resolve problems with speeding and provide a good quality of life for people in the area.

8.11 Question from Councillor John Pierce

Can the Cabinet Member assess the effectiveness of the Whitechapel Public Spaces Prevention Order, which was brought in to tackle anti-social behaviour around the pedestrian footpath connecting Old Montague Street and Whitechapel Road?

Response of Councillor Shiria Khatun, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety

Tower Hamlets first Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) officially commenced on 1st October last year at Kings Arms Court in Whitechapel. The location is a busy pedestrian footpath connecting Whitechapel Road to Old Montague Street and is adjacent to Hopetown Hostel and residential properties. There had been a persistent high volume of anti-social behaviour (ASB) complaints for a few years in that area.

A PSPO provides power for Police and designated Council officers to take action by use of Fixed Penalty Notices or other enforcement actions, if individuals behave in contravention of the order. The location also now has 24/7 recorded CCTV coverage. The cameras monitoring this area are a priority for our CCTV control room here in the Council and they will advise Police and council THEO's of any breaches of the order to enable appropriate action to be taken straight away. The CCTV team also advise Police and Council officers of any anti-social activities which are recorded so it can be used to identify offenders.

Recently, one offender was recorded on CCTV. He was identified by the ASB Team, found to be in breach of a probation order and was arrested on 19th November last year for a number of offences and breach of his probation.

The six week appeal period has now passed and there have been no objections or challenges to the Council's first PSPO. The PSPO's require a considerable amount of work in terms of research, public consultation and implementation.

Supplementary question from Councillor John Pierce

Would you agree that the previous Mayor and his cabinet, particularly his lead for tackling these issues across the borough were asleep at the wheel for the last five years?

Councillor Shiria Khatun's response to supplementary question

I absolutely concur with you Councillor Pierce, particularly it is very concerning, because the previous Mayor, from what I know, lives in Old Montague Street and this area has been subjected to ASB and many other issues for a number of years, so yes it has been neglected and under the new Mayor it has now received a lot of attention that the area has not received in the past.

8.12 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Could the Mayor confirm if any of Tower Hamlets Children's Centres have failed OFSTED Inspections?

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

Following Ofsted inspections in 2014/15, 9 of our children's centres showed cause for concern and were judged to require improvement.

Supplementary question from Councillor Rabina Khan

As I can tell from the report, none of our children centres have failed their inspections. Two were last judged 'good' and 8 have been given 'requires improvement'. Looking at all the report it is clear that each of these centres were doing a good job and only falling down because the criteria on how they were evaluated had changed. Is it true that Tower Hamlets Labour Party passed a motion in December that the Olga Children's Centre was opened in name only and that the empty purpose building should be made available to a childcare provider in order to increase the supply of affordable childcare? Is the Labour Party proposing to privatise children's centres?

Councillor Rachael Saunders' response to supplementary question

I have no recollection of the motion you describe and I wouldn't usually spend Full Council discussing Labour Party motions anyway, what I can tell you though was that when we came to office what we found was a hollowed-out children's centres service. I am absolutely hole hearted about the importance of having, it was something that New Labour created, the fact that we should have an arm of the state which is about supporting families in their earliest years, partly and the bulk of our resources go to the most vulnerable families who need it most, but also because it is such an important part of cohesion and bringing communities together to have children playing with each other and parents meeting one another, so I was really frustrated when the Mayor was elected and I took on this role to find that contrary to all of the assurances we had been given in a scrutiny review that Councillor Whitelock-Gibbs led quite shortly before, in fact the cuts that your administration made meant there was very little going on in a number of our children's centres, these Ofsted issues has not in any way been spoken about or published or discussed even in scrutiny sessions when we asked about it very specifically, and there are real challenges. So we are going to improve the children's centres services, more families and more children will use the services and we will have far more of an impact in tackling the impact of child poverty in the borough.

8.13 Question from Councillor Candida Ronald

What impact will the new school funding formula have on children in Tower Hamlets?

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

London Councils have estimated almost all inner London boroughs will lose funding as a result of the new formula. The vast majority of funding for each pupil will be determined nationally, not locally and we expect full implementation by 2019/20. All schools in Tower Hamlets would lose on average 2.7%. This equates to a Primary losing £55k and a Secondary £203k. The Mayor has been campaigning on this, as have I, as have people across London, local authorities and the Labour Party more broadly.

Essentially the success story of education in Tower Hamlets is partly that of leadership and community engagement and excellent teachers, excellent head teachers and children absolutely taking responsibility for their own success supported by their families, but the other side of that success story is a Labour government which has decided that funding needs to go into the areas which needed it because of poverty. A combination of funding and leadership has meant that our young people have achieved extraordinary success, especially at GCSEs and that is now at very seriously at risk.

Supplementary question from Councillor Candida Ronald

Do you believe that this Tory government are playing politics with our children's lives?

Councillor Rachael Saunders' response to supplementary question

I think that not only are the conservatives playing politics with people's lives, but they are taking money from the poorest children and giving it to the leafy suburbs and it is a scandal.

8.14 Question from Councillor Mahbub Alam

Can the Mayor please list the specific activities and tasks that each of the appointed Mayoral Advisers have carried out in line with their job description which were agreed by the Council?

Response of Mayor John Biggs

The Mayoral Advisers have carried out a wide range of tasks and activities in relation to the areas I have asked them to advise me on, but my office does not offer a diary support so I am unable to provide precise details.

Cllr Chesterton has regularly attended meetings with planning officers and external developers, in order to provide advice to myself and the Cabinet member for Strategic Development, and has provided extensive input to the draft Local Plan and a number of other areas relating to the Isle of Dogs

Cllr Denise Jones has offered extensive advice in relation to service quality, with particular focus on contractual matters in regards to waste and street cleansing. She has represented me in meetings with Veolia, and will continue

to be engaged in this area. I have asked her to lead on the development of the council's position in relation to Aldgate masterplanning, and I understand she has met with officers and Cabinet members to further that.

Cllr Helal Uddin has met with me regularly to discuss community engagement and liaison, and has helped further the development of the Council's approach to community engagement. He has met myself and other members regularly on an informal basis to discuss how the Council can further improve our work in relation to equalities, foster stronger inter-community relations.

Supplementary question from Councillor Mahbub Alam

Can you tell me how many hours each of the three Mayoral Advisors have worked on the specific objectives outlined in the job descriptions for their second jobs and what outcomes have been achieved because of their contribution? Can they provide full details of the items of advice provided by the three Mayoral Advisors to him and what action has been taken by him as a result? I am happy for him to answer as much as he can now, if he can, in the interests of accountability and transparency, but if he has not got the details to hand I am happy for him to write to me with further information by next week and please ensure that the details of his reply are fully recorded in the minutes.

Mayor John Biggs' response to supplementary question

If the member wants to write to me with that question. I have already answered that we don't provide diary support so I can't provide precise details of the activities, but I have given you an account of the work that they are doing and I am very pleased with the work that they are doing and if I wasn't pleased I would remove them from that office instantaneously.

Question 8.2 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. Questions 8.15- 8.27 were not put due to lack of time. Written responses would be provided to the questions.

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

9.1 Report of Cabinet: Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council considered the report of Corporate Director, Resources regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Additional papers for this item were circulated to all Members in an addendum to the Agenda.

Under Council Procedure Rule 14.1.8 Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** an amendment to the recommendations requesting that should the Council make any amendments to the scheme tonight or if there were any technical changes subsequently that took place in relation to matters in the scheme, that the Corporate Director, Resources be authorised to make any technical

changes to the draft Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme to ensure that the Council's approved scheme is adequately reflected and implemented.

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

Following further debate, the recommendations as amended were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

RESOLVED:

1. That the continuation of the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 be approved which retain the 100% support for working age households within the LCTRS scheme but that the scheme is changed to reflect the following:
 - (a) the period for which backdated claims for LCTRS can be made will be one month;
 - (b) the length of time LCTRS claims can continue whilst the recipient is abroad will be 4 weeks;
 - (c) the Council introduces a scheme in addition to LCTRS to help applicants suffering exceptional hardship;
 - (d) households with non-dependants income above £370.50 per week will be excluded from support and non-dependant deductions will apply to all other non-dependants with income below £370.50 per week (as set out in appendix 1 of the Cabinet report);
 - (e) an assumed income for self-employed earners where their self-employment earnings after one year is declared at below equivalent minimum wage levels, minimum wage levels will be assumed in the assessment of LCTRS;
 - (f) the savings limit is to be lowered to £6k from £16k in order to qualify for LCTRS.
2. That the revised Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 (which includes the changes at 1 above) at Appendix 4 be adopted. (to follow).
3. That the Corporate Director Resources be authorised to make any technical changes to the draft Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme to ensure that the Council's approved scheme is adequately reflected and implemented.

9.2 Report of Cabinet: Late Night Levy

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place on the proposed Late Night Levy. The Council noted that the Mayor in Cabinet on

10th January 2017 agreed the recommendations subject to bringing forward the proposed start date to 1 June 2017.

Following debate, the recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Late Night Levy be adopted;
2. That the levy commencement period should be the 1st June 2017.
3. That the commencement time should be from midnight
4. That the income from the levy, less collection costs, should be allocated through the Community Safety Partnership.
5. That Members of the Best Bar None Scheme receive a 30% reduction from the levy.
6. That the following premises would be exempt from the levy:
 - Premises with overnight accommodation
 - Theatres and Cinemas
 - Bingo Halls
 - Community Amateur Sports Clubs
 - Community premises
 - Premises opening past midnight for New Year's Eve only
7. That the following licensed premises would not be exempt from the levy, as :
 - Country Village Pubs
 - Premises in Business Improvement Districts
 - Premises that receive a small business rate relief.

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 Standards (Advisory) Committee - Appointment of Independent Co-opted Member**

The Council considered the report of the Acting Corporate Director, Governance and Interim Monitoring Officer proposing the appointment of an Independent Co-opted Member to the Standards (Advisory) Committee

RESOLVED:

1. That the appointment of Ms Fiona Browne as an Independent Co-opted Member of the Standards (Advisory) Committee be approved for a term of office of four years to expire on 31 January 2021.

11.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Appointment of Co-Opted Members

The Council considered the report of the Acting Corporate Director, Governance and Interim Monitoring Officer proposing the appointment of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-Opted Members.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following nominations for co-optees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved
 - a. Dr Philip Rice as the Church of England diocese representative;
 - b. Victoria Ekubia as the Roman Catholic diocese representative;
 - c. Asad Jaman as the Muslim faith representative; and
 - d. Shabbir Ahmed Chowdhury, Christine Trumper and Fatiha Kassouri as parent governor representatives.
2. That the appointments above will take effect immediately and will be reviewed following the Council elections in May 2018.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that the next items of business be: Item 12.4 - Motion regarding Government’s failure to tackle the social care crisis; Item 12.7 - Motion regarding Scrap the fee for domestic violence victims; and Item 12.8 - Motion regarding Pink Bags & Recycling”. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**12.4 Motion regarding Government's failure to tackle the social care crisis**

Councillor David Edgar **moved** and Councillor Danny Hassell **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Muhammed Ansar Mustaqim **moved**, and Councillor Mahbub Alam **seconded** a friendly amendment to the motion that the following be added to the resolution section of the motion:

Mayor to write a joint letter with other agreeable Group Leaders to the responsible Government Minister, highlighting Tower Hamlets' case.

Councillor David Edgar declined to accept this amendment. The amendment was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

Guillotine Motion

At this point the meeting had sat for three hours and, with no motion to extend the meeting proposed, the guillotine came into effect. As set out in Procedure Rule 9.2, the matter being debated was concluded as if the motion, 'That the question be now put' had been moved and carried. The motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED:

This council notes:

- That the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services estimates that nationally, between 2010 and 2015, £4.6bn was cut from the adult social care budget.
- The Government's announcement that it would be introducing a £240m national Adult Social Care Grant to help fund the increasing costs of social care.
- That the £240m is nowhere near what is needed to properly resolve the social care crisis.
- The £240m grant is not made up of new money; it is funded by top slicing the New Homes Bonus already given to councils. It is estimated that as a result a third of councils will actually lose money overall as a result.
- The NHB top slice means that Tower Hamlets will lose out on £4.8m of NHB in 2017/18 in order to fund the new adult social care grant but will only receive £1.5m in grant.

- This means Tower Hamlets will actually be £3.3m worse off in 2017/18 as a result of the “extra” funding for social care announced in December. This is the biggest reduction in funding in the country.
- The £3.3m reduction in funding comes on top of £58m savings the council already has to make over the next three years as a result of other government cuts to our budget.
- Government also allowed councils to raise council tax by up to 3% in order to provide additional funding for social care.

This Council believes:

- With an aging and growing population the Government should be looking for long term solutions to the social care crisis, not just moving money around and pretending it is new.
- Ministers need to do far more to meet the funding gap, but moving and relabeling pots of money, which would have gone to councils anyway, as new does nothing to achieve this. It just creates perverse situations where the fastest growing – and one of the most deprived – boroughs in the country actually loses out.
- By giving local authorities little choice but to raise council tax in order to fund social care, the Government is passing the buck and getting local authorities to do its work for it.
- Caring for our vulnerable and older citizens shouldn't be a political football. The government should be working cross-party to find long-term solutions to this care crisis.

This Council resolves:

- To call on the Government to listen to the councils and social care professionals and to properly fund the adult social care system.

12.9 Motion regarding Island Health Trust

Councillor Dave Chesterton **moved** and Councillor Candida Ronald **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Peter Golds **moved**, and Councillor Chris Chapman **seconded** a friendly amendment to the motion as set out below:

Delete all after item 7 and insert:

8. There are concerns across the Isle of Dogs regarding the management of the IHT
9. These concerns need to be investigated

The Council believes that:

1. The Island Health Trust are considered to be local assets and should be considered as such
2. All funds held by the IHT are considered as public assets
3. To restore confidence locally trustees should be local with ties to the diverse community of the Isle of Dogs

The Council resolves to:

Refer the motion to the legal and adults services to establish the current situation and to bring forward recommendations to restore local accountable to this valuable asset

Councillor Dave Chesterton and Councillor Candida Ronald indicated that they accepted sentences 1-3 and 9 of the amendment and the proposed resolution and altered their motion accordingly.

Mayor John Biggs proposed an amendment to the above resolution to state:

That the Mayor and the Council's Senior Management Team in consultation with local Councillors and the Lead Members responsible for health explore the issues and carry out an investigation into the matters.

Councillor Dave Chesterton and Councillor Candida Ronald indicated that they accepted this further amendment and amended their motion accordingly.

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

RESOLVED:

The Council notes;

1. The Island Health Trust is the 'Landlord' for the Island Health Centre, located alongside the ASDA store on East Ferry Road, Isle of Dogs;
2. The Island Health Centre came about through a campaign by local people in the 1980s;
3. The Island Health Centre has been funded through a mixture of loan finance and grants from the London Docklands Development Corporation and Tower Hamlets Council;
4. The Island Health Trust's (Landlord's) main sources of income are the rent paid by the NHS and service charges paid by the Doctors. From this, the Landlord has accumulated a surplus of some £1.3m;

5. In spite of holding these substantial reserves the Landlord is charging the Practice an unaffordable service charge, equivalent to the salaries of two doctors. The Practice has now been forced to vacate the first floor of the Health Centre because it can't afford these charges. The Schools' Psychiatric Service has also been forced to move out and the Massage Therapy curtailed because of the high costs, more services are likely to follow;
6. For the first 25 years of its life the Island Health Trust (Landlord) was managed by local Trustees. Any surplus generated was used to fund local health initiatives through a modest grants programme;
7. This changed on 1 April 2016 when the Chair, Suzanne Goodband, appointed a new board entirely made up of people with no local connection: Leonie Hirst, Christian Woodhead, Barak Maoz and Ruth Brannvall (a resident of Sweden);
8. The Trust has ambitions to demolish the Island Health Centre and exploit this valuable site. They are seeking the Practice's consent to vacate the Centre to unidentified temporary accommodation to facilitate this development.
9. Serious allegations have been made by a former Trustee relating to governance and financial management of the Trust; including Trustee personal pecuniary advantage. These have been passed by the Mayor to the Charity Commissioners for investigation.
10. These concerns needed to be investigated.

The Council Believes;

1. The Island Health Centre and the land upon which it stands are public assets;
2. The £1.3m reserves held by the Island Health Trust are also a public asset;
3. The Island Health Trust must be run by local trustees, and the £1.3m invested to support patients of this Practice and health services for local people;
4. Health services locally are being badly damaged by the Trustees of the Island Health Trust;
5. The attempt by the Trustees to 'asset strip' the Island Health Centre is abhorrent;
6. The Island Health Trust are considered to be local assets and should be considered as such;
7. All funds held by the IHT are considered as public assets;

8. To restore confidence locally trustees should be local with ties to the diverse community of the Isle of Dogs;

The Council Resolves to;

1. To pursue with the Charity Commissioners the serious allegations made by a former Trustee;
2. To press the Island Health Trust to bring the Trust back under governance by local people for the benefit of local people;
3. To protect the patients of the Island Health Centre from the damage being done to local health services by the Trustees of the Island Health Trust.
4. That the Mayor and the Council's Senior Management Team in consultation with local Councillors and the Lead Members responsible for health explore the issues and carry out an investigation into the matters.

Motions 12.1 – 12.3, 12.5-8 and 12.10 were not debated due to lack of time.

13. URGENT MOTIONS

The Mayor, Councillor Gulam Robbani and Councillor Rabina Khan all attempted at the meeting to move urgent motions on the proposed change of name at the Osmani School.

Following discussion and a brief adjournment, the Council agree to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to enable the following urgent motion to be debated without notice:

13.1 Motion regarding the proposed change of Osmani School name

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded** a procedural motion to enable an urgent motion regarding the proposed change of Osmani School name to be considered.

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

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

1. The Governors of Osmani School have written to parents stating their intention to change the school's name to Vallance Primary School with effect from September 2017.

2. Osmani School recently underwent a positive OFSTED inspection and has been an established community school for over thirty years.
3. Neither councillors nor the Mayor were consulted on this change in advance.
4. Changing the name of a school is down to the Governing body and the council has no power to veto over it.
5. The mayor and numerous councillors of different political groups have already spoken out against the change, expressing their disappointment and concern.
6. Government education policy means schools increasingly have to compete with one another for pupils and that those who do not get sufficient pupil numbers are at risk of becoming financially unviable.
7. A number of schools face a challenge filling their nursery rolls in the west of the borough at present.
8. The name of the school Osmani Primary School is based on M.A.G Osmani who was a well-known Army Officer who fought in World War II for the British Armed forces and is known as Bangabir – Brave Bengali Freedom Fighter.
9. The school was opened in May 1986 on the site of the former Lord Montefiore Secondary School and Commander Osmani's name was given to the school to commemorate his contribution in serving in the British Army during World War II and in the liberation of Bangladesh.
10. General Muhammad Ataul Gani Osmani was born 1st September 1918 in an affluent family in Dayamir, a village in Sylhet, Bangladesh. Following his graduation in 1938 he began a career in the Civil Service.
11. There are a number of further protest and community meetings planned and the school's Governing Body will be meeting again on 24th January.

This Council believes:

1. Schools in our community should reflect the vast range of cultures and communities who live locally.
2. General Osmani's name is an important symbol for the Bengali community in Tower Hamlets and there are a number of other schools named after notable people with connections to the borough and its residents.

3. The school's governing body was wrong not to consult with parents ahead of making their decision.
4. Whilst government policy changes and changing demographics mean schools need to do more attract pupils the school should rely on its strong OFSTED results to promote itself not abandoning its heritage.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Mayor and other Group leaders to write to the Governors of Osmani school expressing the council's concern at the renaming of Osmani school.
2. To call on the school to run a full consultation with parents at the school on the proposed name change.

The meeting ended at 10.20 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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APPENDIX A – WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS THAT WERE NOT PUT AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING (18 January 2017)

6.1 Question from Abdul Motin

Despite assurance from the Mayor at various public meetings before and after the last Mayoral election that the Mayor would not do without the residents consent; why has the Mayor in his last Cabinet papers identified the Barkentine, and Samuda Estate as a Regeneration Opportunity Area, without consulting us - the resident? Is this a print error? Or was a false promise made by the Mayor at the time of his speech to us?

Response from the Mayor

Thank you for your question. I assume your question relates to the Draft Local Plan, which was approved at Cabinet for public consultation last year.

I would note that the Plan is a public consultation document for all interested parties (including residents) to consider and respond to and we welcome comments on how its content could be improved and strengthened

As regards your specific question about the Barkentine and Samuda Estates you are correct that I have made and stand by my pledge that residents must be thoroughly consulted and in agreement on any plans to significantly regenerate the area.

Whilst I accept that unfortunately the maps could be read to suggest an intention to redevelop the area, I am clear, as paragraph 5.1.7 of the report explains, that the information contained on the maps is conceptual and is not intended to be prescriptive with definite boundaries.

Although the Draft Local Plan makes clear that its contents are for consultation and discussion (and are not policy, nor do they inform planning application decisions) to avoid any further confusion on this matter I have instructed officers to ensure that the wording at the next stage of the Local Plan makes clear that I stand by my commitment to seek resident support for any significant regeneration of the Barkentine and Samuda.

8.2 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman

What is the current mayor's view about the information that Government has only admitted about 13% of the vulnerable Syrian refugees and children, of the total of 20,000 agreed by the Parliament? Also, how many families have been accommodated by Tower Hamlets so far?

Response from the Mayor

It is hugely disappointing that by June 2016 the UK had received just 13% of the 20,000 Syrian refugees the Government had committed to resettle through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS). This is despite indicative offers from local authorities to bring 20,000 Syrians to the UK over the 5-year period of the scheme.

Our experience in Tower Hamlets suggests that the main barrier to increasing the rate of resettlement relates to funding constraints, and it is disappointing the Government continues to rule out providing adequate resources to councils, to cover the costs of housing refugees through the programme (especially in London).

Despite this, as Mayor I committed to resettling 3 to 5 households and have allocated the funding we need. This number is similar to other London Boroughs and reflects the high costs of housing in London and the fact that the Government funding places a high risk of these additional costs falling on the council. Council officers are currently procuring a specialist provider to deliver an 'Integration Support Service' to assist them and we expect our first family will arrive in March or April (dependent on the migration process).

I should add that this council and our officers did outstanding work in relation to the resettlement of unaccompanied minors from the Calais 'jungle' in the last 3 months of 2016, when we assisted over 20 children through our Rest Centre. The Home Office commended our response to this humanitarian emergency, and the tireless work of our social services teams, Oasis UK, Salvation Army, Limehouse GP Practice. I would like to place my thanks on record to all of the individuals who supported this work.

8.15 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed

Can the Cabinet Member inform me what activities were held as part of the 'White Ribbon' campaign, aimed at tackling violence against women and girls?

Response from Cllr Shiria Khatun

'16 Days of Activism' and 'White Ribbon' are both international campaigns to end violence against women & girls (VAWG).

Both are key elements of our work for eliminating VAWG in the borough, and provide a platform for all the work undertaken locally. They support our VAWG strategy by raising awareness amongst the local population and showcasing the vast range of services available. They demonstrate Tower Hamlets' commitment to addressing and altering social norms that encourage or tolerate domestic violence and other forms of violence against women & girls.

This year's campaign reinforced and highlighted the excellent partnership working in the borough. Activities and events that took place during the 16 days involved all key partners including police, health services and third sector organisations.

In total there were 42 events with 20 partner agencies across the borough including

- Various stalls at the London Muslim Centre (LMC), with the Imam giving a sermon with an anti-VAWG/DV message
- Face to face work in LGBT social venues
- 2 stalls at Royal London Hospital
- A mannequin challenge involving 40 individuals (both professionals and public)

The Mayor and Cabinet took part in many of the events, and over 1,000 people were reached directly with 972 pledges to 'not commit, condone or remain silent about VAWG' that were signed by members of the public. This is almost 3 times as many as last year.

8.16 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman

Will the Mayor update the Council as to what steps he and the local police service are undertaking to limit and investigate incidents of homophobia?

Response from Cllr Shiria Khatun

Thank you Cllr Chapman. Can I start by saying that I saw the coverage of the atrocious homophobic abuse you suffered before Christmas and I was appalled. This behaviour has no place in our society, and to be blunt, should not exist in this day and age. I think it is a great credit to your character that you chose to speak out despite how you must have felt following the ordeal.

Tower Hamlets Council takes homophobia and all forms of hate crime very seriously. We work very closely with the police and other agencies to take action against offenders, support victims, and prevent future crime.

The Council takes a number of steps in this area:

- The monthly Hate Incidents Panel coordinates action in critical cases
- We commission two Violent Crime Support Workers who provide specialist support to victims of all hate crime. The

- Violent Crime Workers also undertake regular outreach work, signposting and deliver training on all forms of hate crime.
- We provide guidance and training to staff on responding to hate crime
- We provide training to schools on dealing with homophobic and other forms of bullying
- The 'No Place for Hate' campaign also plays an important role. We have recruited and trained 12 local people to act as champions.

In 2015, the Council commissioned the East London Out Project (ELOP) for the development and delivery of an LGBT Community Engagement Programme. This seeks to improve the quality of life for LGBT residents living and working in the borough through ensuring their rights and interests are represented and their voices are heard;

8.17 Question from Councillor Shah Alam

Can the Mayor provide an update on his pledge that he would hold Poplar Harca to account for its 600% increase in parking charges to residents?

Response from the Mayor

I have repeatedly and clearly communicated my views to Poplar Harca on the need for them to reduce the parking charge increases they had originally proposed.

I met with officers and board members of Poplar Harca to discuss parking charges on five occasions in 2016 (18th June, 19th July, 14th September, 29th November, 21st December 2016).

I have also corresponded many times by letter and email. My letter of 31st October 2016 was subsequently presented to the Poplar Harca Board when they considered the proposal to reduce parking charges.

In the end Poplar Harca is an independent body and makes its own decisions.

8.18 Question from Councillor Muhammad Mustaqim

How much revenue has the Council generated from individuals and companies that undertake commercial filming, media related activities or photoshoots in the borough, for each year since 2011?

How much revenue has the Council generated from individuals and companies that undertake commercial filming, media related activities or photoshoots in the borough, for each year since 2011?

Response from Cllr David Edgar

The income received from commercial filming in the borough since 2011 is as follows:

Financial Year	Actual
2011/12	£65k
2012/13	£98k
2013/14	£176k
2014/15	£334k
2015/16	£359k

There has been no income generated through other media related activities or photoshoots.

8.19 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Will the Mayor inform the Council as to whether his administration applied for funding for new on-street residential chargepoints for plug-in electric vehicles which is available from the Department of Transport?

Response from Cllr Ayas Miah

As part of the Mayor's ongoing commitment to improving air quality in the borough, we continue to examine a variety of options, including charge points.

During the Council Cabinet meeting in July 2016, we requested officers gather information from the market to determine which suppliers were available to install electric charging points on our public highway roads.

We have secured £30k funding as part of our Local Implementation Plans (LIP) towards on-street electric charging points.

We will continue to seek out pots of funding to ensure our ongoing priority of tackling air quality.

8.20 Question from Councilor Shafi Ahmed

Does the Mayor think that there has been an increase of ASB in the last 2 years and does he think that crime is at its lowest?

Response from Cllr Shiria Khatun

Over the last 2 years in Tower Hamlets, there has been a 3.9% reduction in anti-social behaviour calls to Police, both to the 101 number and to 999.

However we know that anti-social behaviour remains a significant concern for residents in the Borough. We are currently reviewing our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour and will be bringing forward a new strategy and

programme this year to respond to this community concern. We are currently commissioning an independent report to help us with this.

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a top priority for the Council. People in Tower Hamlets are entitled to enjoy their communities, public spaces and neighbourhoods free from anti-social behaviour.

We must also recognise that nationally there has been an increase in overall crime. The Crime Survey for England and Wales highlights that the police recorded 4.6 million offences in the year ending June 2016, an annual rise of 7%.

There is no doubt that the Conservative Government's significant cuts to policing budgets have had a real impact and mean that our police forces face a major challenge.

8.21 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani

Is the Mayor planning to go ahead with his proposal to cut the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for thousands of the borough's poorest and most vulnerable residents as the costs incurred in chasing debts – bailiff's letters and visits, court fees and council administrative costs – vastly outweigh the sums owed by impoverished families. Will the Mayor undertake to stop this proposed cut as part of his budget?

Response from the Mayor

I have not made a proposal to reduce the CTRS in the way you describe. I have proposed that we retain 100% support for working age claimants, and do not introduce a minimum payment scheme. This means Tower Hamlets will remain one of just six local authorities in London that still offers 100% support to working age claimants.

The cost to the Council of the existing CTRS is £26.5m per annum, with £19m supporting 22,551 working age households and £7.5m supporting 8,920 pensioner households. Council agreed some minor changes to the scheme, which will reduce the overall cost of the scheme by just £1.4m (5%) but will retain the 100% support and not introduce a minimum payment as most other areas have.

To support local residents who are affected by the changes of the CTR scheme, the collection process will be adapted to provide additional SMS and email reminders and personal visits before any enforcement action is taken. Experience across London when these charges have been introduced have shown that a high percentage of council taxpayers do pay on time, without the need for enforcement action.

I am also proposing in my Budget that we introduce a Tackling Poverty Fund, funded with £5m over the next three years, which will be used to support

families facing extreme hardship, and to help even more local people into employment.

8.22 Question from Councillor Craig Aston

Recommendation 50 of the December Cabinet Office Report “A Democracy that works for everybody: A clear and secure Democracy,” indicates that the Government will be undertaking a review of how democratic checks and balances can be increased in local government structures where power is concentrated. The report goes on to say “that this clearly flows from the issues identified in Tower Hamlets ..which serves as a warning as to how impropriety in the process of an election can lead to issues where those elected take positions of responsibility.” The Government agrees that “such governance must include effective processes that openly and transparently hold those exercising executive responsibilities to account, and which prevent, discourage, and expose municipal corruption.”

Will the Mayor update the Council as to when the Constitutional Working Group will consider these recommendations and will he ensure that they are implemented during the course of the current administration?

Response from the Mayor

Transparency, openness and acting lawfully are guiding principles of this administration and the council is supportive of measures designed to ensure democratic propriety. The Constitution Working Group is charged with bringing the Council’s Constitution up to date and in so doing will take account of the overarching principles so as to provide a Constitution which is an exemplar of propriety and best practice.

The Constitutional Working Group is not an executive body nor is it politically proportionate, being made up of two members from each political group.

Those members will make proposals to General Purposes Committee and ultimately to the Council to enable all members to contribute to the direction of travel and the detail of the provisions. It is my understanding that the first sections of the Constitutional amendments are expected to be discussed at GP Committee in the next month or two.

Constitutional changes are a matter for the Council to agree not the Mayor, but I am confident they will be agreed by GP and Council before the end of this term.

8.23 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan

What is the amount of debt owed to the council in the last 12 months that has been written off?

Response from Cllr David Edgar

In the last 12 months the council has written off £13,172,233 of debts. The majority of these are historic debts, many of which were over 6 years old and very unlikely to be collected.

The vast majority of the debts which have been written off are historical and did not occur under this administration.

8.24 Question from Councilor Maium Miah

How much money does the Council generates per annum from properties or assets that are leased, rented or for which any kind of payment is received by the authority? What was the average percentage in the rent, lease, rates or any other amount received or claimed by the Council, for 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 and planned for 2017/20 budget? I'd be grateful if you could provide simple key headline figures in a table rather than referring to webpages or excel sheets. Thank you.

Response from Cllr David Edgar

The actual income generated by the Council from various property assets is shown in the table below.

	Hire of Premises	Rents - Dwellings	Rents - Garages	Rents - Other Land & Buildings	Service Charges	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
2014/15						
General Fund	(797,327)	(32,496,719)		(1,707,460)	(207,093)	(35,208,599)
HRA		(67,556,890)	(1,291,011)	(2,971,839)	(17,063,401)	(88,883,141)
Total	(797,327)	(100,053,609)	(1,291,011)	(4,679,298)	(17,270,494)	(124,091,740)
2015/16						
General Fund	(774,169)	(34,288,907)		(1,493,295)	(198,372)	(36,754,744)
HRA		(67,808,998)	(1,305,628)	(3,192,187)	(19,629,478)	(91,936,291)
Total	(774,169)	(102,097,905)	(1,305,628)	(4,685,482)	(19,827,850)	(128,691,035)
2016/17 *						
General Fund	(724,369)	(24,668,973)		(1,351,927)	(186,542)	(26,931,812)
HRA		(47,824,601)	(928,201)	(2,828,077)	(18,928,921)	(70,509,800)
Total	(724,369)	(72,493,574)	(928,201)	(4,180,004)	(19,115,463)	(97,441,612)

* The information for 2016/17 is provided up to 9th January 2017. Leaseholder Service Charges are raised annually at the start of the financial year with Tenanted Service Charges collected weekly. The General Fund rental income for dwellings relates mainly to charges in respect of temporary accommodation.

Annual Increases:

Hire of Premises

Premises charges are reviewed in the Council's Fees and Charges report that is considered by Cabinet in January each year.

Rents - Dwellings

Rental increases for dwellings within the Housing Revenue Account are approved by Cabinet in January each year. In accordance with Government policy, tenants' rents will be reduced by 1% per annum for each of the four years from 2016-17 to 2019-20. The rent rise for 2015-16 was based on the previous Government policy of rents increasing in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) +1%.

Rents – Garages

Garage rents usually increase annually in line with inflation and in accordance with the increase in tenanted service charges - see below.

Rents – Other Land and Buildings

The majority of non-residential properties are let on individual agreements which include rent reviews that are negotiated at fixed intervals. These reviews are based on market conditions and are specific to the particular property. Income is credited to the General Fund or Housing Revenue Account depending upon which powers the asset is held under.

Service Charges

Leaseholder Service Charges are based on the recovery of costs incurred. An initial charge is raised in April each year, based on estimated costs. Final charges are raised in October following the end of the financial year to ensure that actual costs are recovered.

Tenant Service Charges are approved by Cabinet as part of the Rent Report in January each year, and usually increase in line with inflation. For 2017/18 the increase was 2%, with this figure also included in the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy as the assumed annual increase for the period to 2019-20.

8.25 Question from Councillor Harun Miah

Since June 2015, can the current Mayor provide of the list of the following information:

How many people have been moved to areas, towns and cities, outside of Tower Hamlets?

Where have they been moved to?

How many people were placed in temporary accommodation?

How many of the above are under the age of 16?

Response from Cllr Sirajul Islam

I presume this question refers to households in temporary accommodation. The deep housing crisis across London, the government's savage cuts to council budgets and the scarcity and growing cost of rents in London, means that it can be necessary, and in some cases beneficial to families, for some to be temporarily housed outside London.

Housing people outside London is relatively rare and currently fewer than 3% of the families in temporary accommodation are outside the capital with over 97% staying in London. However the problem of housing temporary households in properties with rents that are fully covered by Housing Benefit within London is proving more and more difficult.

This isn't anything new of course; in the last two years of the previous administration families from Tower Hamlets found themselves placed in areas as far away as Leicester, for example:

- Basildon
- Broxbourne
- Dartford
- Gravesham
- Leicester
- Maidstone
- Thurrock
- Rochester

Our plans to build over 1,000 new council homes in Tower Hamlets will help to make the situation easier but there is no doubt the Government's Housing and Planning act has made things a lot harder for councils to help those made homeless.

Barking & Dagenham	110
Barnet	21
Basildon	1
Bexley	19

Brent	15
Bromley	1
Broxbourne	3
Croydon	40
Dacorum	1
Ealing	22
Enfield	109
Epping Forest	2
Gravesham	5
Greenwich	42
Hackney	70
Haringey	29
Harrow	9
Havering	6
Hillingdon	9
Hounslow	5
Islington	2
Kensington & Chelsea	3
Lambeth	19
LBTH	998
Leicester	1
Lewisham	30
Luton	3
Maidstone	1
Medway	33
Merton	72
Newham	238
Redbridge	156
Richmond	1
Southwark	7
Sutton	5
Tendring	3
Thanet	1
Thurrock	3
Waltham Forest	53
Wandsworth	1
Watford	1
Welwyn Hatfield	2
Westminster	5
TOTAL	2157

This means fewer than 3% of families in temporary accommodation are housed outside London.

It is not currently possible to report the breakdown either of the number of people or the number of children in temporary accommodation.

8.26 Question from Councilor Suluk Ahmed

Can the Mayor inform the members and residents how many requests have been received by the council as a result of its new 'Clear Up Project'?

Can a clear and concise procedure and protocol document be given to all persons and organisations that have reported any requests or against whom/which any reports or allegations have been made so that they are fully aware of how their request shall be dealt with.

In the interest of transparency, can a copy of these documents be provided to councillors please, and be published on the council's internal and website.

Can the Mayor confirm how this process can now assure complete independence from political or senior management influences, bearing in mind they are the investigators' paymasters?

Response from the Mayor

The Project Team received 65 individual allegations in the period 8 September to 8 December 2016.

The Project is led by an independent Project Manager, seconded from the Civil Service. Investigators are recruited by the Project Manager without any input from Councillors or Officers. Neither the Project Manager nor any investigators have any connection with Tower Hamlets, save for their involvement with this specific project.

8.27 Question from Councilor Gulam Kibria Choudhury

Can the Cabinet Member, Cllr David Edgar, provide the simple headline monetary figures of the list of asset above sold by the Council between 1998 and the current date, with a simple total headline amount for each year. I'd be most grateful if the specific information requested can be given in a simple table rather than being referred to webpages or excel sheets. Thank you.

Response from Cllr David Edgar

- 1) Excludes RTB sales and other RTB-related receipts (lease extensions, discounts repaid, mortgages, additional land leases, preserved RTB receipts). Also excludes asset transfers without receipts and unattached capital receipts such as overage payments.
- 2) There is very little detail regarding transactions prior to 2008/09, especially the oldest ones, so cannot confirm that they are definitely all asset sales and not just other income treated as capital receipts (some may be lease extensions or repayments of grant for example).

- 3) Between early 2015 and the present all such disposals have been overseen by the Commissioners.

Year of sale	Asset	Gross Receipt (£)
2016/17	32-34 Hessel St	27,000
2016/17	11-31 Toynbee St	8,000,339
2016/17	31 Turner St	1,800,000
2016/17	327-329 Morville St	4,751,493
2016/17	2 Jubilee St	4,050,093
2016/17	Cheviot House, 227-233 Commercial Road	14,040,476
2016/17 Total		32,669,401
2015/16	296 Bethnal Green Road	555,862
2015/16	Blue Anchor pub	235,000
2015/16	38-44 Whitehorse Rd/611-613 Commercial Rd	3,000,000
2015/16	Land adjacent to 309-317 Cambridge Heath Rd	85,000
2015/16 Total		3,875,862
2014/15	Ocean Estate Block H	5,420,975
2014/15 Total		5,420,975
2013/14	Land at Lukin Street	2,900,000
2013/14	Enwonwu Sculptures	89,933
2013/14	Land at 1-94 Cotall Street, E14 6JX/Y	610,000
2013/14	Enfranchisement sale of freehold - 103-137 White Horse Lane, 1-5 Sundra Walk(odd), 1-5 Beaumont Grove(odd), 262-306 Mile End road(even)	70,000
2013/14	Queens Head PH, 8 Flamborough Street, E1	350,000
2013/14	Travelodge Site	2,910,000
2013/14 Total		6,929,933
2012/13	Limehouse Library: 638 Commercial Rd, E14 7HS	945,000
2012/13	Freehold of Besford and Dinmont House	804,500
2012/13	805 Commercial Road (CPO)	300,000
2012/13 Total		2,049,500
2011/12	Land adjacent to Shadwell Station	130,000
2011/12	Evershed House	120,000
2011/12	63A Sewardstone Road	289,664
2011/12	13 Pier Head, Wapping	1,050,041
2011/12	Ocean Estate Block F Feeder Site 3 (LIFRA)	2,778,101
2011/12	195 Swaton Road	235,759
2011/12	102 Tredegar Road	371,906
2011/12	19 Parfett Street	442,560

2011/12	117 Poplar High Street (Woodstock Terrace)	876,359
2011/12 Total		6,294,390
2010/11	Uamvar St (David House site)	363,000
2010/11	14 Menotti Street (sale of freehold)	125,000
2010/11	517a Commercial Road	45,000
2010/11	Ocean Estate Block F Feeder Site 2 (Essian St)	797,146
2010/11	Ocean Estate Block F Feeder Site 4 (Harford St)	377,229
2010/11	Ropery St dwellings	800,000
2010/11	148 Swaton Road	215,000
2010/11	156 Swaton Road	220,000
2010/11	162 Swaton Road	220,000
2010/11	170 Swaton Road	266,000
2010/11	Ocean Estate Block F Swanlea Premises Manager's House (Crossrail CPO)	6,744,489
2010/11	Essex Wharf (Crossrail CPO)	350,000
2010/11	22-28 Underwood Road	54,262
2010/11		2,750,000
2010/11 Total		13,327,126
2009/10	Former Lovatt Arms site (Thomas Road/Burdett Road)	162,000
2009/10 Total		162,000
2008/09	Blessed John Roche/Bishop Challenor	8,061,506
2008/09	British Prince Public House	305,000
2008/09	Madani school	1,330,000
2008/09	Railway Arms Public House	451,000
2008/09	Christian Street (Bishop Challenor)	10,000,000
2008/09 Total		20,147,506
2007/08	South Quay Plaza Estate (sale of freehold)	930,750
2007/08	St Matthias Centre	5,000,000
2007/08	43 Whitehorse Road	350,000
2007/08	34 Linford Drive	310,000
2007/08 Total		6,590,750
2006/07	723 Commercial Road	9,436,000
2006/07	Furze Green	2,020,862
2006/07	Whitechapel Library, 77-80 Whitechapel High St	810,000
2006/07	Alberta House Blackwall Way E14	1,100,000
2006/07	Land at 86b Newark St, E1	225,000
2006/07 Total		13,591,862
2005/06	Land at 15 Turin Street	35,000
2005/06	52-58 Commercial Road	300,000
2005/06	1 Cornwall Avenue	250,000
2005/06	303-305 Burdett Road	245,000
2005/06	12 Menotti Street	77,430
2005/06	Timberland Road	70,000

2005/06	Watney Street Car Park	46,000
2005/06	Mulberry School 6th Form site	1,600,000
2005/06 Total		2,623,430
2004/05	Land adjacent to Barkantine Health Centre	300,000
2004/05	Tower Warehouse 2-10 Wapping Lane	1,339,027
2004/05	Tower House	1,472,500
2004/05	3 Bancroft House	15,000
2004/05	Siege House	2,006,127
2004/05	2 Menotti Street	75,400
2004/05	170 Vallance Road	73,080
2004/05	172 Vallance Road	73,950
2004/05	Brunswick Arms	75,000
2004/05	Mulberry School - Cable Street site	1,609,367
2004/05 Total		7,039,451
2003/04	4 Menotti Street	69,052
2003/04	Land at Blackwall Tunnel	36,342
2003/04	55 Royal Mint Street	30,000
2003/04 Total		135,394
2002/03	Shandy Park Mosque	152,000
2002/03	Baitaul Amin Mosque	112,700
2002/03	83 Cannon St Road	75,000
2002/03	13 Chesil Court	23,520
2002/03 Total		363,220
2001/02	27-31 Westferry Road	400,000
2001/02	149-153 Cannon Street Road	140,000
2001/02	5 Deancross Street	100,000
2001/02	65 Cudworth Street	121,000
2001/02	Rose and Punchbowl	38,379
2001/02	88 Bishopsway	26,749
2001/02	Flora Close	75,000
2001/02	18 Chesil Court	25,600
2001/02	12 Cavell Street	25,000
2001/02	Glengall Causeway	28,625
2001/02	Mowlem School NB: We still own the school so this must have been another patch of land (no details available)	240,518
2001/02	Fairfoot Library	35,525
2001/02	John Morley Sol	336,600
2001/02	The Whitechapel Centre, Myrdle Street	950,000
2001/02 Total		2,542,996
2000/01	Cudworth Street /Collingworth	204,000
2000/01	86 Bishops Way	32,388
2000/01	90/92 Clinton Road	268,000
2000/01	19 Chesil Court	28,446
2000/01	100 Hamlets Way	6,000

2000/01	Land at Pollards Street	6,000
2000/01	98 Bishops Way	16,581
2000/01	Mosque Lease	500,000
2000/01	Haverfield Road	285,000
2000/01	Farrance Street	200,000
2000/01 Total		1,546,415
1999/00	Chater House	2,209,268
1999/00	Ujima HA	3,537
1999/00	Keeling House	1,130,000
1999/00	575/577 Manchester Road	72,000
1999/00	1/8 Ford Square	27,500
1999/00	19 Mulberry House	21,000
1999/00	82 Bishops Way	20,000
1999/00	94 Bishops Way	10,744
1999/00	12 Chesil Court	10,744
1999/00	14 Chesil Court	10,446
1999/00	49 Bazely Street	83,000
1999/00	3 Chesil Court	6,445
1999/00	Braintree Street Site (tranche)	35,000
1999/00	Central Garage	3,250,000
1999/00	Seabright St Depot	70,000
1999/00	49 Nelson Street	100,001
1999/00	255/259 Westferry Road	27,000
1999/00	85 Hesperus Crescent	19,500
1999/00 Total		7,106,185
1998/99	Grand Union Cooperative	200,000
1998/99	81 Hewison St	50,000
1998/99	6 Chesil Court	6,850
1998/99	Quaker Street	65,000
1998/99	697 Commercial Rd	82,000
1998/99	13 Swinbourne Hse	19,949
1998/99	34 Sewardstone	21,600
1998/99	2 Montford Hse	21,000
1998/99	38 Fane House	6,451
1998/99	Chesil Court	32,985
1998/99	Beehive PH	56,000
1998/99	Weaversfield School	300,000
1998/99	208 Cable Street	17,750
1998/99	209 Cable Street	159,750
1998/99	James Olley Hse	200,000
1998/99	274/280 Bishopsgate	57,000
1998/99	Fawcett Library	100,000
1998/99	Island Gardens Station	134,200
1998/99 Total		1,530,535
1997/98	37 Stepney Green	505,000
1997/98	Kirtland Centre	115,000
1997/98	St Mary St Michael	40,000

1997/98	Bombay Grab	103,900
1997/98	191 Whitechapel Road	138,000
1997/98	66 Brick Lane	51,000
1997/98	Land At Hadleigh St	20,000
1997/98	DLR Millwall Park	13,000
1997/98	St Leonards	1,299,760
1997/98 Total		2,285,660
Grand Total		136,232,591