

# HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

---

Monday, 19 March 2018 at 6.30 p.m.

MP702, 7th Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent,  
London E14 2BG.

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

**Members:**

Chair: Councillor Helal Uddin  
Vice-Chair: Councillor John Pierce  
Councillor Andrew Wood, Councillor Gulam Robbani, Councillor Rabina Khan and  
Councillor Shiria Khatun

**Substitutes:**

Councillor Danny Hassell, Councillor Chris Chapman, Councillor Marc Francis and  
Councillor Rajib Ahmed

**Co-opted Members:**

Anne Ambrose	Tenant Representative
Moshin Hamim	Leaseholder Representative

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

**Contact for further enquiries:**

The Committee Services Officer  
Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG  
Tel: 020 8364 5554  
E-mail: [rushena.miah@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:rushena.miah@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk>

Scan this code for  
an electronic  
agenda



## Public Information

### **Attendance at meetings.**

The public are welcome to attend meetings of the Committee. However seating is limited and offered on a first come first served basis.

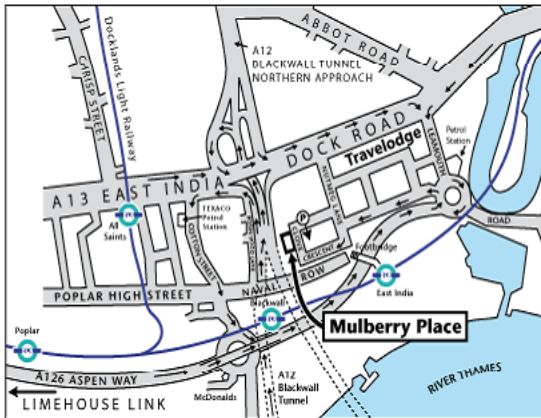
### **Audio/Visual recording of meetings.**

Should you wish to film the meeting, please contact the Committee Officer shown on the agenda front page.

### **Mobile telephones**

Please switch your mobile telephone on to silent mode whilst in the meeting.

### **Access information for the Town Hall, Mulberry Place.**



**Bus:** Routes: D3, D6, D7, D8, 15, 108, and 115 all stop near the Town Hall.

**Docklands Light Railway:** Nearest stations are East India: Head across the bridge and then through the complex to the Town Hall, Mulberry Place

**Blackwall station:** Across the bus station then turn right to the back of the Town Hall complex, through the gates and archway to the Town Hall.

**Tube:** The closest tube stations are Canning Town and Canary Wharf

**Car Parking:** There is limited visitor pay and

display parking at the Town Hall (free from 6pm)

If you are viewing this on line: ([http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/content\\_pages/contact\\_us.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/content_pages/contact_us.aspx))

### **Meeting access/special requirements.**

The Town Hall is accessible to people with special needs. There are accessible toilets, lifts to venues. Disabled parking bays and an induction loop system for people with hearing difficulties are available. Documents can be made available in large print, Braille or audio version. For further information, contact the Officers shown on the front of the agenda



### **Fire alarm**

If the fire alarm sounds please leave the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit without deviating to collect belongings. Fire wardens will direct you to the exits and to the fire assembly point. If you are unable to use the stairs, a member of staff will direct you to a safe area. The meeting will reconvene if it is safe to do so, otherwise it will stand adjourned.

### **Electronic agendas reports and minutes.**

Copies of agendas, reports and minutes for council meetings can also be found on our website from day of publication.

To access this, click [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee) and search for the relevant committee and meeting date.

Agendas are available at the Town Hall, Libraries, Idea Centres and One Stop Shops and on the Mod.Gov, iPad and Android apps.



QR code for smart phone users.

	<b>PAGE NUMBER(S)</b>
<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS</b>	<b>5 - 8</b>
<p>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.</p>	
<b>2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b>	<b>9 - 16</b>
<b>3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION:</b>	
<b>3.1 SELF-BUILD</b>	
<p>The Committee will receive a presentation on this topic at the meeting.</p>	
<b>3.2 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR</b>	
<p>The Committee will receive a presentation on this topic at the meeting.</p>	
<b>3.3 VOID PROPERTIES - What is the Council doing to bring them into use?</b>	
<p>The Committee will receive a presentation on this topic at the meeting.</p>	
<b>4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 1

## **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:-

Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance & Monitoring Officer 0207 364 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>

This page is intentionally left blank



HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE,

## LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

### MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 5.06 P.M. ON MONDAY, 29 JANUARY 2018

MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,  
LONDON E14 2BG.

#### **Name**

Councillor John Pierce  
Councillor Shiria Khatun  
Councillor Andrew Wood  
Anne Ambrose  
Councillor Rachel Blake

#### **Role**

Vice-Chair  
Member  
Member  
Co-opted Member  
Invited speaker

#### **Apologies**

Moshin Hamim  
Councillor Rabina Khan  
Councillor Gulam Robbani  
Councillor Helal Uddin

Co-opted Member  
Member  
Member  
Chair

#### **Officers**

Mark Baigent  
Elizabeth Bailey

Interim Divisional Director Housing  
Senior Strategy, Policy and  
Performance Officer

Seema Chote  
Rafiqul Hoque  
Rushena Miah  
Ellie Kuper-Thomas

Housing Options Manager  
Service Manager – Housing Options  
Committee Services Officer  
Planning Officer

Due to the Chair's apologies, the Vice Chair, Councillor John Pierce, Chaired the meeting.

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Councillor John Pierce declared that he is a Board Member of Tower Hamlets Homes and East End Homes.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

There was one amendment in reference to page 12 of the agenda pack. It was clarified that it was Sandra Fawcett, not Anne Ambrose, who chaired an ASB sub-group in the borough.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair further to the amendment being noted.

### **3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Due to speaker availability, it was noted that the order of business would be changed as follows:

1. The London Plan
2. Homeless Scrutiny Review Action Plan
3. Spotlight Session from the Lead Member for Strategic Development and Waste.

However for convenience the minutes will follow the order as published on the agenda.

#### **4. SPOTLIGHT SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND WASTE**

The Committee heard a presentation from Councillor Rachel Blake, Lead Member for Strategic Development and Waste, on housing development and housing delivery vehicles. Councillor Blake began the presentation by listing key housing achievements over 2017/18. These included:

- 148 new Council homes delivered at Watts Grove and let at social rents and Tower Hamlets Living Rents.
- Facilitated delivery of 3,326 affordable homes since April 2014. 6,879 market (private) units completed since April 2014.
- New Build contract let for 5 infill sites.
- 132 homes purchased, 83 Poplar HARCA and 49 Council, using £13.8m spend of Right to Buy Receipts (RTB).
- Implementation of Affordability Commission recommendations, including new Rent Policy May 2017, introducing Tower Hamlets Living Rent aimed at households on median incomes.
- 150 resident sign ups on new Self Build & Custom Build register, forum established.
- New housing vehicles launched including Mulberry Housing Society and Seahorse Homes.

Councillor Blake then moved on to explain some of the risks:

- Financial restrictions – housing revenue account borrowing cap, RTB receipts (30% cap and 3 year deadline).
- Brexit and ensuing challenges.
- Reduced CIL & S106 income for infrastructure and sustainability of residential developments.
- Availability of land and supporting funds.
- The affordability of shared ownership schemes.

The presentation concluded to state what could be done to mitigate the risks. This included:

- Positive planning – masterplan/development frameworks for growth areas.
- Infrastructure provision to un-lock difficult sites.

## HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE,

- Fast tracking schemes that meet the 35% affordable homes policy requirement.
- Implementing recommendations of the Fire Safety Scrutiny Review.

### **Questions from Members:**

Members asked if there was an update on the Isle of Dogs and Poplar Opportunity Framework. Councillor Blake explained that this was a Greater London Authority policy to coordinate the planning and coordination of development on the Island. It was noted that it was the first time that such a policy was being applied to a residential space.

When questioned whether the one thousand affordable homes mentioned in the presentation would be delivered via a big scheme, Mark Baigent, Interim Head of Strategy, Sustainability and Housing Options, confirmed that the Council would be welcoming both large and small schemes. Councillor Blake said that the Council had drafted a programme of development so a number of sites have already been identified for development.

It was confirmed that Tower Hamlets Homes would be expected to manage new build affordable properties.

Members highlighted the importance of sufficient and innovative waste management solutions as there had been issues reported in the borough about the difficulty of waste vehicles gaining access to new build properties.

Councillor Blake said that she was aware of the issue and would be eager to return to the Committee to discuss waste management at a later date.

Councillor John Pierce queried who was on the Mulberry Housing Society Board. It was confirmed that the membership of the board consisted of Ken Jones, who has had housing management experience from Waltham Forest Council, Sayed Uddin from Deloitte, Ann Sutcliffe from Tower Hamlets Homes and Mark Baigent from Tower Hamlets Council.

The Committee requested to see a trajectory of development for Mulberry Housing and invited the Chair of the organisation to speak at a future meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, in order to engage with its work.

<p><b>ACTION:</b> Elizabeth Bailey, Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer, to add update from the Mulberry Housing Organisation Chair to the Forward Plan.</p>
--

Members asked what the alternative options were in response to unaffordable shared ownership schemes. Councillor Blake said that the Council needed to make stronger arguments for sustainability with the providers of the schemes.

A query was raised on how to get community support for the infill approach. It was clarified that infill development is the process of developing vacant or under-used pockets of land within existing urban areas. It was suggested that

some of the reasons why the community disliked infill development was because they felt no connection to the development and because of density implications. One solution was to adopt a local lettings approach in relation to infill.

In response to a question about large developments dominating areas with poor infrastructure, Councillor Blake confirmed that the Local Plan will be prescriptive on the scale of developments and will be working with neighbouring boroughs, such as Newham, to build infrastructure such as bridges connecting isolated developments to town centres.

Members expressed concern that ground floor commercial space on new developments often remained unoccupied. Councillor Blake confirmed that the Council would be willing to take a risk on businesses applying to occupy the space to ensure they were not left vacant for too long.

### **RESOLVED**

To note the presentation from Councillor Blake housing development and housing delivery vehicles.

## **5. QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE DATA FOR KEY RESIDENT PROVIDERS**

It was noted that the quarter two performance data would be emailed to Members after the meeting. It was requested that any questions arising from the report should be emailed to Elizabeth Bailey, Senior Strategic Policy Officer, who will collate the responses and share with the Committee.

<b>ACTION:</b> Members to be emailed Q3 performance data.
---

## **6. THE LONDON PLAN**

The Committee heard a presentation from Ellie Kuper-Thomas, Planning Officer, on the new London Plan. The Greater London Authority's London Plan is being consulted upon until March 2018 for implementation and adoption in 2019. The Tower Hamlets Local Plan will be adopted in autumn 2018.

Key aims of the London Plan:

- Ensuring good growth that is both sustainable and inclusive
- Re-balancing housing delivery
- Determining a policy on small site delivery
- Determining a policy on the green belt

The London Plan themes included:

1. Planning London's Future – target to make 80% of journeys sustainable.

## HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE,

2. Spatial Development Patterns – identifying strategic areas of regeneration.
3. Design – managing the impact of tall buildings and introducing tall building zones.
4. Fire safety.
5. Social Infrastructure – more public toilets.
6. Economy – 400m hot food takeaway restriction zone to schools.
7. Pub protection policy, new emphasis in heritage policy.
8. Green Infrastructure – new urban green factoring score to be introduced.
9. Sustainable Infrastructure – air quality policy and circular economy of recycle and reuse.
10. Transport – target of 80% of all journeys to be made by public transport, bicycle or foot by 2041.

With regard to housing, the London target was to build 660,000 new homes, 65% of which would be affordable. Therefore the new Tower Hamlets housing target was reduced from 3,931 to 3,511 new homes a year.

Ms Thomas explained that eighteen new policies on housing were to be introduced. These included:

- Increasing housing supply.
- Presumption in favour of small site development where no design code is present.
- Identifying ‘meanwhile’ use of sites for housing.
- Increasing affordable housing target to 50%.
- Threshold approach to applications.
- Affordable housing tenure.
- Redevelopment of existing housing and estate regeneration.
- Ensuring best use of stock – to target voids and holiday let issues.
- Housing size mix - determining suitable housing unit mix but not setting prescriptive dwelling size mix requirements for market and intermediate homes.
- Supporting build to rent and reducing affordable housing targets on such developments.
- Widening the definition of gypsy traveller.
- Student Accommodation – increasing the target to 35% of affordable student accommodation.
- Introducing purpose built shared living.

### **Questions and comments from Members**

Some Members expressed concern that the increase in development projects would impact urban density, narrow streets, increase pollution levels, impact access to community services such as GP surgeries and negatively impact community cohesion. There were concerns that some of the newer developments seemed to be purposefully segregating its residents from the wider community by restricting the use of the new build gyms and swimming pools to residents.

They also queried why Tower Hamlets was seeing more development compared to outer London. Ms Kuper-Thomas explained that it was due to a mixture of east London being a popular location and because there were a large number of feasible sites identified for development.

When asked if the Council knew where the 3511 new homes would be built, it was confirmed that the Council had a good idea of where development would be taking place due to site mapping exercises.

With regard to protecting pubs, Councillor Pierce asked if the plan included a more generous Section 106 agreement in order to enable businesses to thrive. Ms Kuper-Thomson said that there was nothing specific on S106.

The Committee requested to learn more about the work of the Conservation and Design Advisory Panel and how the community could engage with their work.

**ACTION:** Michael Ritchie, Place Shaping Team Leader LBTH, to write a briefing note on the Conservation and Design Advisory Panel (CADAP).

Members asked for clarification on the term 'meanwhile use', it was explained that this was the redevelopment of empty commercial premises for non-commercial use. Members were of the opinion that the spaces should be utilised for community benefit.

Councillor Andrew Woods raised concerns about the small sites policy. He used an example from his ward to illustrate how the policy could be exploited. He said that there was an unsuccessful attempt to convert a garage space into a tall tower block of one room apartments. Ms Kuper-Thompson assured Councillor Woods that there were design codes in place to prevent incongruous development.

Ms Thomas reiterated that the deadline for comment on the consultation was 2 March 2018. Members were instructed to get in touch with Ms Thomas if they had anything to add to the Council's response.

## **RESOLVED**

To note the presentation on the London Plan.

## **7. HOMELESS SCRUTINY REVIEW ACTION PLAN**

The Committee heard a presentation from Rafiqul Hoque, Service Manager Housing Options and Seema Chote, Housing Options Manager, on the Homeless Scrutiny Review Action Plan.

## HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE,

Key points from the presentation included:

- A working group within Housing Options has been formed to implement the Housing Reduction Act 2018, which will come into force from April 2018.
- Preventing homelessness has become a statute in law.
- A personalised housing plan will be created for people in risk of homelessness. A fresh approach will be required to support people in sustaining their tenancy or to provide secure accommodation.
- Staff will be required to do a homelessness assessment and a face to face interview with homeless people.
- Housing Options will be delivering motivational interview training to staff.
- Greater working with the voluntary sector to provide frontline services, information on benefits and finding employment.
- There will be an emphasis in recording feedback on what is working and what could be improved.

### **Questions and comments from Members:**

Members asked for clarification on recommendation 9, page 21 of the pack, because it seemed to contradict itself. It stated that those in rent arrears would be considered intentionally homeless but then went on to say that those tenants who signed a tenancy unaware it was unaffordable would not be considered intentionally homeless.

Mr Hoque said that if a tenancy was approved after the Council had done an assessment and it was later discovered the tenant could no longer afford to live in the property, they would not be deemed intentionally homeless as the fault would lie with the Council in not assessing that person properly. He went on to say the Council had a duty to support anyone in danger of becoming homeless whether that was to provide advice on money, benefits or issues with their landlord.

Councillor Khatun raised a concern saying that in their ward they had seen previously decanted buildings being used for temporary accommodation for homeless families. Mr Hoque assured Members that there are quality checks performed on the suitability of the accommodation and some funding available to bring the accommodation up to standard.

Officers reiterated that the Housing Reduction Act is planned to come into force from April 2018 and that the Government would be providing local authorities with transitional money to facilitate implementation.

<p><b>ACTION:</b> for the Committee to receive an update on the Homeless Reduction Act and Action Plan six months after implementation. Elizabeth Bailey, Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer, to add to the Forward Plan.</p>
---

## HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE,

Members wished to know what role the Council would play in conflicts between tenants and private landlords. Officers said that the Council had a duty to mediate with both the landlord and tenant to come to a resolution.

With regard to street homelessness, Officers confirmed that the new Act also required the Housing Options team to provide rough sleepers with a personalised housing plan. They said the borough may see an increase in rough sleepers who wish to access the service. In order to facilitate greater access, the reception areas of housing support services will provide resources such as access to advisors and telephones to enable homeless people to make enquires.

### **RESOLVED**

To note the report and action plan.

### **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ann Ambrose, Tenant Representative, requested the Committee review the Committee's actions list at a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.06 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Helal Uddin  
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee