

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2018****THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG****Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Sufia Alam	Councillor Tarik Khan
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor James King
Councillor Shah Ameen	Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan
Councillor Ruhul Amin	Councillor Eve McQuillan
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Rachel Blake	Councillor Puru Miah
Councillor Kevin Brady	Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Councillor Victoria Obaze
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Councillor Mohammed Pappu
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Councillor Leema Qureshi
Councillor Dipa Das	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Dan Tomlinson
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Councillor Muhammad Harun	Councillor Val Whitehead
Councillor Danny Hassell	Councillor Bex White
Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain	Councillor Andrew Wood
Councillor Asma Islam	

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Ayas Miah in the Chair

The Speaker of the Council brought the Council up to date with some of his activities since the previous Council meeting.

He advised that he had the great pleasure of attending a variety of engagements and community events. This included:

- A number of award events and anniversary celebrations
- Citizenship ceremonies.
- A meeting with the Bangladeshi Human Rights Commission, where he met the Secretary General of the Women's Branch to Tower Hamlets
- The Army Cadet Force visitor and competition day, that provided opportunities to young people.
- A meeting with the King of the Ashanti, (which is a region in Ghana), and his distinguished guests, when he was presented with an honorary doctorate of education.

- A Merchant Navy Day service.
- The 20th Pearly Kings and Queens Festival parade.
- The launch of Tower Hamlets Homes' Financial Health Centre.

The Speaker also thanked the Deputy Speaker, Councillor Victoria Obaze for deputising for the Speaker at certain events during recent weeks.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Kyrsten Perry.
- Councillor John Pierce
- Councillor Abdal Ullah

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Speaker of the Council reported that he had received a tabled list (as set out at the end of this item) of Non Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (Other Interests) in relation to Agenda Item 12.1 regarding school cuts (this is set out below)

The following declarations for interests that must be registered (other interests) were made:

Councillor Dan Tomlinson on Agenda Item 12.1 regarding school cuts as he was a Member of the GMB union.

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman on Agenda Item 12.1 regarding school cuts as he was a member of the University and College Union.

Councillor Amina Ali on Agenda Item 9.13, a Member Question regarding Three Colt Street, on the basis that she lived in the area.

Councillor Muhammad Harun on Agenda Item 5.3, Petition requesting that Tower Hamlets Council welcome child refugees on the basis that he was a human rights lawyer and he regularly represented asylum seekers.

Tabled List of 'other interest that must be registered' –
Agenda item 12.1 Motion regarding school cuts.

Name of Member	Register of Interest
Mayor John Biggs	Member of GMB
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Member of GMB
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Member of GMB
Councillor Sufia Alam	Unite Union
Councillor Amina Ali	Unite Union Unite Community
Councillor Shah Ameen	Member of GMB
Councillor Ruhul Amin	Unite Union

Councillor Asma Begum	Member of GMB
Councillor Rachel Blake	Member of GMB (note – the web record says ‘Sponsorship’ but Cllr Blake has confirmed she has not to date been sponsored by the GMB.)
Councillor Kevin Brady	Community Union
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Member of GMB
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Unite Union
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Unite Union
Councillor Dipa Das	Unite Union
Councillor David Edgar	Unite Union
Councillor Marc Francis	Member of GMB
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Unite Union
Councillor Muhammad Harun	Member of GMB
Councillor Danny Hassell	Member of Unison
Councillor Asma Islam	Member of GMB
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Member of Unison LEA Governor, John Scurr Primary School
Councillor Denise Jones	Member of Unite (the Union) Mulberry Schools Trust-Trustee
Councillor Rabina Khan	Member of GMB
Councillor Tarik Khan	Unite Union CWU
Councillor James King	Unite Union
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	Unite Union
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Unite Union
Councillor Ayas Miah	GMB
Councillor Puru Miah	TSSA Union Unite Union
Councillor Abdul Mukit	Unison
Councillor Victoria Obaze	Member of GMB Sir John Cass Secondary School Governor
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	Unite Union
Councillor John Pierce	Unite Union
Councillor Helal Uddin	Member of GMB
Councillor Abdal Ullah	Member of GMB
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	Member of GMB
Councillor Bex White	Member of Unite Community
Councillor Val Whitehead	Prospect

3. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on 18th July 2018 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

There were no announcements.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**5.1 Petition regarding Glyphosate/Roundup**

Geoffrey Juden and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He provided reassurance about the product's safety for use, in light of the scientific evidence. Nevertheless, he recognised the need to continue to review the evidence and he was happy to meet the petitioners to discuss the issues further.

RESOLVED:

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

5.2 Petition regarding a People's Vote on the final Brexit deal

John Shore and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit responded to the matters raised in the petition. She advised that the Council had set up a Brexit Commission comprising a number of experts and stakeholders to look at the possible impact on the Borough of leaving the European Union. She had also submitted a Motion to this Council meeting requesting that the Council support a people's vote on a final Brexit deal and would be taking part in the people's march in support of this.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer for a written response within 28 days.

5.3 Petition asking Tower Hamlets Council to please welcome child refugees

Melanie Tuff and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He was proud of the work that the Council had carried out, as part as of the vulnerable persons resettlement scheme and the national transfer system for welcoming child refugees. The Council remained committed to supporting the target for the allocations and would continue to put pressure of the Government to help with this process.

RESOLVED:

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

5.4 Petition regarding the provision of proper basketball facility in Millwall Park

Local residents addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit responded to the matters raised in the petition.

She noted the need for major works to be carried out to the basketball court to address the challenges arising from the changing nature of the local area to protect residential amenity. In view of the issues, the Council were looking to explore measures to mitigate the problems, subject to the available of funding and the requirements in terms of lighting and access.

RESOLVED:

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

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council, referring to his written report circulated, 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, Councillor Andrew Wood, Leader of the Conservative Group, briefly responded to the Mayor's report.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

7 – Administration Motion regarding Brexit

Councillor Amina Ali **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council notes that it is now over two years since the Brexit vote and the Government still has no satisfactory Brexit plan. Since the vote we have gone from the top of the G7 for economic growth to the bottom. For communities up and down the country, jobs and businesses are under threat and it is absolutely right for local authorities to be making a stand on their behalf.

This Council also notes that the Tower Hamlets Labour manifesto 2018 included a pledge to *“campaign for a referendum on the final terms of any Brexit deal, so that local people are able to express their view on the future of this country.”*

This Council further notes:

- Communities in Tower Hamlets have benefited from significant EU funding in recent years through the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. The borough currently receives £2.6 million towards initiatives to improve the local economy, development, infrastructure, employment and training.
- More than one in seven residents in our borough, some 41,000 people, are from the remaining 27 EU states. They play a valued role in one of the country’s most diverse and inclusive communities.
- The uncertainty and potential impact of Brexit on our businesses. In Canary Wharf, each day 120,000 people work in 37 office buildings alongside 300 shops, cafes and restaurants. Further, Brexit will hit many small businesses, with almost 99% of the 16,800 firms based here employing fewer than 250 people.

This Council believes that the white paper confirms the government intends to leave the customs union and lose access to the single market for services, which account for 80% of the UK economy. As a result, the Withdrawal Agreement will fail to meet Labour’s six tests, specifically the test that any deal must deliver the “exact same benefits” we have as full members of the EU.

This Council also notes that the Mayor has established a Brexit Commission, chaired by Cllr Amina Ali, to lead local preparations for the UK’s departure from the European Union.

This Council calls on the Government to abandon any plans for a hard Brexit and to give the British people a People's Vote on the final Brexit deal, along with the opportunity to vote on keeping the many benefits Britons enjoy by staying in the European Union.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

8 – Opposition Motion by the Conservative Group regarding anti-social behaviour & crime in Tower Hamlets

Councillor Andrew Wood **moved** and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Asma Begum **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the following amendment to the motion to be debated as tabled:

Added text underlined.

Deleted text scored out.

The Council notes:

The results of the 2018 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey show that the top concern for residents was crime with 41% concerned. Only 48% rated Policing as excellent, very good or good, the lowest rating of the subjects surveyed. 60% felt drug use or drug dealing issue was a big problem.

It is clear that residents are deeply concerned about the impact of ASB and drug dealing on their neighbourhoods.

The key issue facing residents in many instances is a lack of police resources to investigate and arrest those who are carrying out these offences and until the Government start to properly fund our police service the impact on the ground will be limited despite any progress to make it harder for the perpetrators.

The council is however committed to doing all we can to tackle ~~We have four core problems as regards~~ ASB and the issues that affect people's quality of life. This includes addressing:

1. Reporting difficulties leading to frustration from residents and probably under reporting
2. The use of NOX canisters and the limited means the Police have to control their use
3. The distribution of CCTV cameras with heavy concentrations in some areas and few elsewhere
4. There being different processes and contact methods for different issues which affect residents, a noticeable example being the 7 different steps in the Councils 'Who do I call Crime & ASB reporting in TH' flowchart or the flowchart used by Limehouse SNT mapping all of the different contact methods.

5. That the council requires a 1-page flowchart (with links to other information) to document the information indicates that there is a communication problem.

Given the major reductions in Police numbers and funding we need to find ways of using the resources we have more effectively, and holding the Conservative Government to account for their reckless approach to community safety.

According to a National Audit Office (NAO) report published this month, the Home Office does not know whether the police system in England and Wales is "financially sustainable", and highlights that across England and Wales:

- There has been a 19% reduction in real-terms funding to Police and Crime Commissioners from 2010/11 to 2018/19;
- There has been an 18% reduction in the size of the total police workforce between March 2010 and March 2018.

In Tower Hamlets, we have lost about 200 police officers since 2010 and three police stations in recent years (Limehouse, Brick Lane and Isle of Dogs) have been closed as a direct result of Government cuts to police budgets.

Further, three-quarters of PCSOs in the borough were axed between 2010 and 2017.

The main method for reporting ASB is the 101 service but this has fundamental problems:-

- It can be difficult to get through especially at night
- It is one dimensional and cannot easily be use it to share locations, video or photographs.
- It does not record other quality of life issues, in particular noise
- It's lack of integration frequently results in SNT teams requiring residents to report issues twice:
 - Firstly on 101 to get a CAD reference
 - Secondly, to the SNT via email or their own phone perhaps using WhatsApp to share photos

However all of these problems are eclipsed by the Conservative Government's complete disregard for community safety as evidenced by their dangerous cuts to policing budgets, leaving boroughs like Tower Hamlets with hundreds of fewer police officers on the street.

Council notes that the Metropolitan Police has recognised the issues with 101, and the council will offer any support it can to help make improvements.

Official Government advice is to report anti-social behaviour through 999 in an emergency, or through 101 in a non-emergency or through your Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The council also has an online reporting tool which is publicised on the council's homepage.

The council is also partnered with OWL (Online Watch Link) which provides the public with the latest local crime alerts sent by email, telephone or SMS.

~~Tower Hamlets is disproportionately dependent on the 101 service unlike our neighbours who usually provide other methods for reporting ASB.~~

~~Examples are:-~~

- ~~• Newham residents are able to call their Enforcement and Safety Team on a 24 hour number. There is also an online reporting tool.~~
- ~~• Greenwich residents are able to report non-urgent incidents to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team by email and phone number.~~
- ~~• Southwark residents have access to an Antisocial Behaviour Unit contactable by telephone or email~~
- ~~• Hackney residents have an ASB team for streets, public spaces and parks contactable by phone and email~~

~~Other London Boroughs also have online reporting forms prominently displayed when residents undertake an internet search on the boroughs name and ASB.~~

~~Tower Hamlets by contrast provides no central email address or phone number to call and only has an online reporting form at the very bottom of a long web page.~~

~~This may explain why the Borough Commander's report for 2016 showed Tower Hamlets had the worst rates of ASB in East London.~~

Given the Government's major underresourcing of the police and the consequent difficulty that residents face in trying to report ASB, this Council therefore proposes to ask the Cabinet Member for Community Safety to review the options which are currently available to residents, and to examine the effectiveness in other boroughs of the following in meeting the challenge:

1. The establishment of a 247 phone service together with a central email address for all ASB and quality of life related issues
2. This service to be fully integrated, dealing with noise and other related issues to ensure that residents only need to know just one number/one email
3. The Police agree that ASB reported to the Council is included in any allocation of resources to ensure that residents do not have to also call 101 in order to secure the allocation of Police resources to their area
4. The development of an online tool + app allowing residents to report a range of issues online. This could be based on the 'MyStreet' App rolled out in Sunderland this year. Other possibilities are the FiFiLi app, OWL. The council could simply buy the license for 'My Street' which would be the equivalent of an online One Stop Shop for quality of life issues. As with FiFiLi this would have the ability to tag precise locations on a map and to share photographs.

~~These solutions will:~~

~~Ensure that residents have the ability to share precise locations, videos, pictures across multiple platforms but that it would all go to same place.~~

~~That easily obtained software solutions which are now available will help integrate and share this data with partners~~

The Council notes:

~~That the Labour manifesto for 2014 pledged “A 24hr noise and ASB hotline to help tackle rising crime — Nuisance noise doesn’t sleep, that’s why Labour will introduce a 24h hotline to report noise and anti-social behaviour at weekends to ensure people’s complaints are addressed.”~~

~~By instituting proposals outlined above will reduce pressure on the 101 service, allow the collection of more data, reduce the frustration residents feel as they have multiple methods for reporting issues and provide the council and partners with more intelligence as where to focus necessary activities.~~

The Council resolves to follow the example of Labour controlled Lambeth Council and:

Ask the Cabinet Member for Community Safety to consider the effectiveness of implementing a its Public Space Protection Order for Novel Psychoactive Substances, which allows Police Officers, PCSO’s and THEO’s to issue fines up to £1,000 per incident Borough wide. The order prohibits the “ingestion, inhalation, injection, smoking, possession or otherwise use of intoxicating substances” in public spaces. The order also provides powers to stop the selling or supply of intoxicating substances.

Such has been the success in Lambeth that the council is now extending their PSPO for another 3 years having first introduced it in 2015

This, if introduced in Tower Hamlets ~~will~~ could provide the Police and Council with more tools to combat the ~~young men~~ people often in cars who litter our streets as they party.

The council notes that:

The Psychoactive Substances Act came into effect in May 2016 and makes it illegal to sell or import Nitrous Oxide for human consumption (exempting medical supply). However, the use of Nitrous Oxide, as opposed to the import and sale of nitrous oxide remains legal. Equally whilst driving when intoxicated may result in fines or a custodial sentence, Nitrous Oxide is not one of the drugs with a specified limit within the Road Traffic Act.

The legal situation with regard to Nitrous Oxide remains confused ~~which is why the adoption of a targeted Public Space Protection Order while~~ so we must work alongside our local MP’s and Ministers, London Councils and the Local Government Association for an enforceable solution to this ongoing problem.

This council institutes a review of the current CCTV and lighting network.

The Council rightly highlights on its social media the successes the cameras have had in arrests (on average 3 a day). Those areas with little or no CCTV feel left out. ~~Criminals and boy racers know where the holes are in the CCTV network i.e. Limehouse Op Naga or Wapping High Street. Temporary cameras can help but the Borough has changed a great deal in the last 15-30 years but that the locations of our CCTV cameras has not followed to the same extent. Given the S106 and CIL resources the council has in the bank, it should also be possible to add new cameras as well. but it is important that we balance the need for surveillance with the right to privacy and ensure that our CCTV complies with the requirements set out in the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice, following our established 4 step evaluation process where CCTV is judged as needed.~~

The council calls upon Cabinet Member for Community Safety to consider the further use of LED bulbs ~~would also~~ to help reduce costs and improve visibility on our streets.

The council notes that Norfolk County Council have recruited local residents as unpaid Police Support Volunteers to help with CCTV monitoring. ~~This would be an opportunity for Tower Hamlets residents to take part in assisting the fight against ASB. and we call on the Cabinet Member for Community Safety to raise this with the Borough Commander.~~

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

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

RESOLVED:

The Council notes:

The results of the 2018 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey show that the top concern for residents was crime with 41% concerned. Only 48% rated Policing as excellent, very good or good, the lowest rating of the subjects surveyed. 60% felt drug use or drug dealing issue was a big problem.

It is clear that residents are deeply concerned about the impact of ASB and drug dealing on their neighbourhoods.

The key issue facing residents in many instances is a lack of police resources to investigate and arrest those who are carrying out these offences and until the Government start to properly fund our police service the impact on the ground will be limited despite any progress to make it harder for the perpetrators.

The council is however committed to doing all we can to tackle ASB and the issues that affect people's quality of life. This includes addressing:

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5. That the council requires a 1-page flowchart (with links to other information) to document the information indicates that there is a communication problem.

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2. This service to be fully integrated, dealing with noise and other related issues to ensure that residents only need to know just one number/one email
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4. The development of an online tool + app allowing residents to report a range of issues online. This could be based on the 'MyStreet' App rolled out in Sunderland this year. Other possibilities are the FiFiLi app, OWL. The council could simply buy the license for 'My Street' which would be the equivalent of an online One Stop Shop for quality of life issues. As with FiFiLi this would have the ability to tag precise locations on a map and to share photographs.

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The council calls upon Cabinet Member for Community Safety to consider the further use of LED bulbs to help reduce costs and improve visibility on our streets.

The council notes that Norfolk County Council have recruited local residents as unpaid Police Support Volunteers to help with CCTV monitoring- and we call on the Cabinet Member for Community Safety to raise this with the Borough Commander

9. 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-

9.1 Question from Councillor Val Whitehead:

Can the cabinet member please update the council on what further steps will be taken to improve services and support for our children who are looked after, following the latest Ofsted monitoring visit?

Response of Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People:

As you might be aware, the latest monitoring visit from Ofsted took place in August and on this occasion, the Inspectors were looking at the way we meet our obligations as corporate parents to our looked after children. This was an area that was found to require improvement at the main Ofsted inspection last year. However since further inspection, we uncovered additional issues, which needed to be resolved. Ofsted had reported that there had been an improvement in key areas since the inspection last year, but there are still areas of weaknesses. The assessment by the Inspectors reflected our own self assessment of this area of work and where our focus needs to be going forward. Such that Ofsted noted that senior leaders agreed with Ofsted Inspectors findings. They are determined to accelerate the pace of change and are taking appropriate action. There were a number of areas that received positive praise and commentary and these related to the fact that our decisions about taking children into care are underpinned by effective and assessable legal advice. They said that as a result of our work around the sufficiency strategy, we are increasing the range of placements for our looked after children.

Supplementary question from Councillor Whitehead:

Can you outline some of the specific areas for improvement that were identified and are there plans in place to address these?

Councillor Hassell's response to the supplementary question:

We have identified issues with assessments, in particularly health assessments and we are working with our partners in health to identify the causes of the delays for initial health assessments. The services are working to improve and streamline processes for permanency planning. There is now a process for improved scrutiny and oversight of decisions and more systematic planning. We know that the assessments need to be updated and we have a plan in place to make sure that is being delivered. I have made it clear to Officers that we will be monitoring this closely. Myself, the Mayor and the Cabinet remain committed to ensuring that the improvements we have seen elsewhere in our children's social care are delivered in this area and we will be making sure that the pace of change is accelerated. We are very confident we can ensure that is delivered. That is why we have been ambitious for our young people and we have asked Ofsted that when they come back for our inspection in November, they look again at this area of work to make sure this has been progressed.

9.2 Question from Councillor Peter Golds:

In 2016 the Mayor of London pledged to plant 2,000,000 trees across the Capital during his period of office. Will the Mayor inform the council as to how many of the 42 trees pledged to be planted each and every day in Tower Hamlets have actually been planted, or as in the case of the Isle of Dogs have been planted and then left to wither and die?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment:

As you know the pledges made by the Mayor of London covers the whole of London and therefore the number of trees that might be planted in any particular borough won't be the same. That said we have made progress over recent years.

In 2016/17, the Mayor of London's pledge was supported by a programme, which we applied to, working with the Friends of Victoria Park. We received £5,000 and planted 25 trees in the park. More recently, the Mayor of London announced the Greener City Fund including a significant amount of money in August 2017. We have made applications to that fund.

In addition to the work that is being done by the Mayor of London, we locally have made a commitment to increase the number of trees in the Borough by 2,000. We have planted a larger number of trees in the last five years. For example, in the last year we have planted over 108 trees. You mentioned in your question the point about making sure that the trees we plant thrive and I am happy to follow up that point.

Supplementary question from Councillor Golds:

In the summer, there were trees planted in the East Ferry Road area and it ended up with local residents coming out and bringing water on a daily basis to try and plant the trees and getting quite concerned when one of the trees died. The other issue is about the so called pledge of 2,000,000 trees and the calculation of 42 trees was based on that. The Council does get an enormous amount of Community Infrastructure Levy and s106 money. Can we see a some of this money being put into trees. After all, this is one of the key measures to help us with global warming and cleaning up the environment.

Councillor Edgar's response to the supplementary question:

As I have said, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets manifesto did make a commitment to increase the number of trees in the Borough and we are working on plans in the budget process this year to deliver this. How exactly that was going to be funded will be one of things that will come out of that process. I think that it is clearly important if we plant trees that they thrive and we take good care of them. Only last Saturday morning as I was walking down Burdett Road, a member of the public came up to me and asked me about these trees - the two trees that I had tweeted about that had died. So that I think it is an issue we need to pay attention to and we will do.

9.3 Question from Councillor Muhammad HM Harun:

Langdon Park has two pedestrian pathways starting from the Station. The pathway ending at Chadbourn Street has inadequate lighting. Many residents, particularly women, have raised the lack of lighting with me and an ME response I received highlighted that lighting would be difficult to install given

the difficult budget circumstances. Would the Mayor be willing to look at this particular situation to see what can be done?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities:

In view of the inconsistency in the public lighting provision around Langdon Park DLR, I have asked officers to look into this again following your question. They will consider the possibility of improving the lighting so residents feel safer. While council budgets are under pressure officers will look into identifying a suitable funding provision to undertake these works.

Thank you again for raising this and officers will update you shortly.

(No supplementary question was asked).

9.4 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Will the Mayor explain as to why is the Council so poor at communication?

Response of Mayor John Biggs:

We are lot more active as a Council than the previous administration. We no longer have a weekly newspaper and we are using a range of channels to communicate with members of the public across the borough. We won't always get everything right. We have restructured our communications team. The latest residents survey said that the number of people feeling informed by the Council has gone up from 68% to 73%, which I think is above the London average. I can read you a range of other information as well.

But to focus on your question, I would say two things. Firstly, in the budget this year, the Conservative Group proposed reducing the Coms budget. Coms is not just about spin doctors peddling lies or whatever you like to say in your newsletters, because we don't do that. It is also about communicating with the public about things that are important. On the Novichok issue, we did not communicate the pictures as the Police communicated with us very sensitively about what they want us to say and to not say. This was an exercise carried out by the security services and they already had a lot of surveillance information. It would be revealed by them and managed by them. We played our full part which involved some communications, but not on that particular point.

Supplementary question from Councillor Wood:

Everyone else was showing the pictures except us, which I did find odd in retrospect.

Mayor Biggs's response to supplementary question:

Given that the people in question were by then about 4000 miles away, it is unlikely that the pictures would have really elicited many more observations.

9.5 Question from Councillor Eve McQuillan:

Can the Mayor confirm that action has been taken to fix the CCTV on the Bancroft estate, given residents' concerns about crime in the area?

Response of Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing:

I'm glad to report that following a site visit on the 2nd of August, the CCTV cameras on the Bancroft Estate have been fixed and are now operational.

Officers have also made sure that the Tenant Management Organisation have been made aware of the repairs. I would like to thank Cllr McQuillan for her work on this.

Supplementary question from Councillor McQuillan:

Can I ask if the area can benefit from the design out crime programme?

Councillor Islam's response to the supplementary question:

Yes it can. We are exploring areas that will most benefit. The Bancroft Estate area will benefit from the design out crime officer and so will other areas of the Borough. Once the plans have been finalised, the information will be shared. In the meantime, the Council will continue to work hard with the Bancroft Estate TMO to make sure the community who live there are safe.

9.6 Question from Councillor Kevin Brady:

Given the potentially devastating financial implications for local businesses if the Network Rail sale of railway arches goes ahead, what has the council done to stand up for business tenants that use the arches, and to challenge Network Rail's rent increases?

Response of Councillor Motin Uz – Zaman, Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth:

The Mayor and myself visited some of the arches in Bancroft Road and met some of the people that have been in business for generations. It is totally unacceptable the actions of Network Rail, the way they have increased their rents, over 300% and that was just to increase the value of their assets to sell it off. The Mayor and myself has also written to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chief Executive of Network Rail. The Mayor has also written to the Evening Standard to raise the issues of backing the Guardian of the Arches campaign to go against the sale. We have also got a response back from Network Rail to say that they will adhere to the continuity of the lease. But we are concerned as that was mainly for profit.

Supplementary question from Councillor Brady:

I really welcome what yourself and the Mayor have done on this matter, engaged with the residents particularly in areas like my ward who have a lot of these businesses.

What work is being done to engage with the new owners on maintaining rent levels and to even try to decrease rent levels for some of the business owners?

Councillor Motin Uz – Zaman’s response to the supplementary question:

The buyer has been confirmed and its Telereal Trillium and Blackstone Property Partners. They have committed to working with the existing tenants to ensure that good landlord practices are adhered to. They will look at getting people to sign tenants charters and also ensuring that they have an engagement team to work with the tenants. I am also working with Officers to look at, subject to funding being available, getting some of the arches valued independently, to use as a negotiation point to ensure that the rent levels that the arches have to pay are reasonable.

9.7 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar:

Could the Lead Member please report on the progress of the Local Plan Examination in Public?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

The following issues have been discussed: The structure and soundness of the plan, air quality, viability, housing and housing needs, economy and economic growth, tall buildings and design, retail markets and community facilities. The following policies have been particularly explored around: developer contributions and infrastructure. Our evidence base has clearly demonstrated that the plan is viable.

Supplementary question from Councillor Akhtar:

What are the remaining items for examination?

Councillor Blake’s response to the supplementary question:

The next steps for the examination in public is to explore some of our site allocations in detail. It will be really important that our new policies on tall buildings, establishing five tall building zones, our affordable housing policy that sets a target of 50%, and a 35% minimum are embedded in our policies, to make sure that our site allocations can realise their homes, and places and jobs that we so desperately need in Tower Hamlets. So far the Local Plan Examination in Public has been positive. It's really important that we keep up the great work that Officers have been doing to make sure we get this plan through.

9.8 Question from Councillor Puru Miah

Can the lead member please give me an update with regards to Council plans to introduce loading bays in the south east side, outside Ghandi Oriental Foodstore, in Mile End Ward.

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment:

This issue arises from a planning permission that was granted for a new development on Thomas Road. It is one that involved a loading bay outside a new development to give access to a ground floor commercial development. The proposal that is being consulted on will involve the loss of six parking pays, to make provision for the loading bay to make sure that emergency vehicles can still access the route. I have held two meetings with residents effected by this, and responded to the 21 emails that I have received about this. At the second meeting, Councillors Sirajul Islam, Puru Miah and Sabina Akhtar were there to discuss this in detail. Since the consultation has finished, Council Officers have visited the site with the developer and with highways offices to look at whether alternatives can be proposed that will have less of an impact on parking. I look forward to the proposals they come back with and I will be sharing this with the ward Councillors and the residents who are understandable concerned about the impact.

Supplementary question from Councillor Miah:

Does my colleague agree with me that residential parking bays are a public amenity and they should not be given up to benefit what is in this case, a property speculator that made over £40 million by selling their car park?

Councillor Edgar's response to the supplementary question:

Public parking bays are clearly an important matter. The number of residents who have been in touch with me about this certainly make that clear, that people are very interested to maintain the bays and are concerned about the level of overcrowding and problems with parking in that area. The loading bay that is proposed here is attached to a development that has gone through a proper planning process. It involves, I think, the provision of cash and carry or some large supermarket which I know in the past was well used by people locally and from further afield so there is some balancing to be done. I am very clear about the concerns local residents have about this. I am extremely keen that officers, are able to find if at all possible, a solution that meets the needs of residents and that emergency vehicles can provide the sorts of services that we want them to do as easy as they can.

9.9 Question from Councillor Bex White

Could the Cabinet Member report on the successful bids for the Mayor's Air Quality Fund?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

The first round of the application process for the Mayor's Air Quality fund opened 1 June 2018 and closed on 31 July 2018. A number of applications were received and Officers were reviewing the applications. So far, the campaign has put in place a range of measures including education programmes with schools and measures to enable air quality monitoring.

Supplementary question from Councillor White:

Can the lead Member inform the Council of any plans for World Car Free Day, that is coming up this Saturday. I know that many cities across the world and some other London Boroughs are taking part. Are we planning on doing anything in Tower Hamlets?

Councillor Blake's response to the supplementary question:

We have not fully announced the plans but hope to announce some of the plans tomorrow. Since we now have anti idling powers, we will certainly be doing some anti- idling actions across the Borough. We plan some road closures around some of our most congested areas and hopefully around schools. We really want to increase the number of schools that are able to take up options for school streets, but it's a real watch this space situation.

9.10 Question from Councillor Marc Francis:

Will the Lead Member for Environmental Services clarify how many disabled people had their Personalised Disabled Parking Bay removed under the revised eligibility criteria introduced by the former Mayor and Lead Member in 2014, and how many of those residents have had their bay reinstated since those criteria were set aside in early 2018?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment:

The Council clearly has to take it's responsibilities in respect of personal information seriously. It would have to do that in any event, particularly after the changes in the data protection act. The Council has a retention policy of two years in respect of this type of personal data and if it had that data, then by now, that data would have been deleted and it would not have been possible to answer the question about the impact of changes in policy. I understand that one of the changes that did take place as a result of temporary policy introduced in January 2018, was an introduction of a different way of dealing with permit renewals, so that they are treated as automatic, unless there is a substantial change in a persons situation. For the longer term it might be key that we did work out a way we can track the aggregate impact of policy changes without the underlying personal details, so I think it is important we look at ways of doing this for the longer term.

Supplementary question from Councillor Francis:

In my experience, I have had a several constituents that were adversely effected by the introduction of this policy under the former Mayor as part of his programme to deliver an extra 1000 residents parking places. Nobody ever came to this Council Chamber, the Cabinet or anywhere else to say that this was going to be partly at the expense of disabled residents having their personalised bay taken away.

In response to Members enquiries that I have raised, and I have passed the most recent one on to Councillor Edgar, I was told that the former parking development manager held all of the applications for people who applied to renew their bays. Almost all of those bays were refused on the basis of the significantly increased threshold to be able to qualify for a bay - 33 out of the 36 points instead of 24 out of the 36 points that you need for a blue badge. This is an entirely arbitrary figure plucked out of the air, seemly by officers and the lead member at the time. Now it seems that the parking development officer shredded all of the applications that people put in, that all of the emails were deleted and the project initiation document that allegedly introduced this change of police has also gone missing. Will the Lead Member investigate all of those things?

Questions 9.11 - 9.15 was not put due to lack of time. A Written response would be provided to the question. (Note the written responses are included in Appendix A to these minutes)

10. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**10.1 Report of Cabinet: Statement of Licensing Policy 2018-2023**

The Council considered a report regarding the Statement of Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Statement of Licensing Policy 2018 – 23 be agreed.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Localism Act 2011 - Appointment of Independent Person

The Council considered the report on the Appointment of the Independent Person under the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED:

1. That the re-appointment of Ms Elizabeth Hall as an Independent Person be agreed for a period of 3 years effective from the date of the Council meeting and concluding on 18 September 2021

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 Motion regarding the school cuts.

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

1. £2.8bn of funding has been cut from school budgets nationally since 2015, representing a real-terms cut to school funding.
2. These school cuts have directly led to a major reduction in the number of secondary teachers, teaching assistants and support staff, across the country including in Tower Hamlets.
3. There are 15,000 fewer members of staff in secondary schools in England between 14/15 and 16/17, whilst roll numbers have increased by 31,000.
4. In Tower Hamlets, between 14/15 and 16/17:
 - a. 49% of schools have seen a reduction in staffing levels;
 - b. 56% of schools have seen an increase in the pupil to teacher ratio;
 - c. There are nearly 500 more pupils.
5. That schools in Tower Hamlets will receive £448 less in funding per pupil in 2019/20 than they did in 2015/16.
6. That this represents an overall loss of £15.9m between 2015 and 2020.

This Council further notes that:

1. Tower Hamlets has some of the best schools in the country: a result of proper funding from a Labour government and the hard work of teachers, pupils, the Council and parents.
2. There has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of education offered in our schools over the past 20 years. This has not happened

by accident but has been a result of partnership and leadership but also crucially of adequate funding.

This Council believes that:

1. The Government is cutting schools funding. As well as damaging everyone it is doing severe damage to social mobility and the quality of education offered in our schools.
2. Schools in Tower Hamlets showcase what can be achieved when schools are properly funded.
3. As staff costs make up the main expenditure for schools, cuts to school budgets inevitably mean fewer members of staff in schools.
4. Our schools should receive the funding they need.

This Council resolves:

1. To support the campaign led by the School Cuts alliance of education unions (including the National Education Union, NAHT, GMB, UNISON, Unite and ASCL), local schools, Mayor John Biggs and local MPs Rushanara Ali and Jim Fitzpatrick against the cuts to education funding.
2. To call on the Government to fully fund the pay increase for teachers that is recommended by the School Teachers' Review Body.

12.2 Motion regarding the Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Guidelines on Anti-Semitism

Councillor Peter Golds **moved** and Councillor Andrew Wood **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council expresses alarm at the rise in anti-Semitism in recent years across the UK including this borough. This includes incidents when criticism of Israel has been expressed using anti-Semitic tropes.

We therefore welcome the UK Government's announcement on December 11th 2016 that it will sign up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) guidelines on anti-Semitism, which has been passed by the GLA and many London Boroughs including Brent, Hackney, Harrow, Islington and Redbridge and which defines anti-Semitism thus:

"Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled

against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

The guidelines highlight manifestations of anti-Semitism as including:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

This Council hereby adopts the above definition of anti-Semitism as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and pledges to combat this pernicious form of racism.

The meeting ended at 10.00 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

APPENDIX A – WRITTEN RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE NOT PUT AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING (19th SEPTEMBER 2018)

9.11 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze

Can the Mayor please provide an update on the delivery of affordable and social housing in the borough?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

Tower Hamlets continues to deliver the highest numbers of new homes overall and affordable housing in particular, not only compared with other London boroughs but on a national basis.

In the year Mayor John Biggs was first elected the number of affordable homes built jumped from 610 the year before to 1061 – a 74% increase. The following year it increased further to 1066 and then in 2017/18 926 more were delivered. All of these were far in excess of anything delivered under the previous mayor.

There is a strong pipeline of schemes in development and the Council itself is bringing forward plans for a further 1,000 new council homes to be provided over the next four years, whilst identifying opportunities for a further 1,000 new council homes in the following four years.

The council will shortly be bidding to the Greater London Authority for grant funding and additional borrowing headroom to finance this programme.

9.12 Question from Councillor Abdul Mukit

What steps are being taken by the Council to prevent ASB problems in the Weavers area?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities:

We are very aware that people have serious concerns about drug use and ASB in that part of our borough and we share those concerns. Drugs are ruining too many lives across the capital, and while keeping the streets safe is mainly a police matter collectively our public bodies can do better at tackling this problem.

As a council we have invested to fund additional police officers for our borough

Weavers Ward is one of the 4 Wards that form the Neighbourhood Pilot area. A dedicated Neighbourhood Manager has been in post since 16 March 2018 to help better coordinate the council and other agencies' responses to ASB and other issues in this area, although there was recently a change in personnel.

The feedback provided by residents across the neighbourhood management area is being investigated to look at how we can take these suggestions forward. These will be the subject of future focus groups with residents to progress. We also aim to set up a Neighbourhood Agreement which will seek to develop an agreement with residents which will identify and set out agreed priorities for a local area.

Permanent cameras are currently installed in 17 locations around Weavers Ward, including Ravenscroft Street, Columbia Road and Hackney Road. Operation Continuum, the joint council and police operation against drug dealing in our borough has also led to multiple arrests in the Weavers area which we hope will continue to help disrupt drug dealers operating in the area.

There is clearly a lot more to be done to tackle the scourge of crime and ASB in this area and the Mayor and I consider this a significant priority.

9.13 Question from Councillor James King

When will the council be making environmental improvements to tackle anti-social behaviour at the southern end of Three Colt Street in Limehouse?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment:

Residents of Three Colt Street have highlighted a continuous concern of anti-social behaviour in the area and we are working in close partnership with the local Police Limehouse Safer Neighbour Team to alleviate the impact on local residents and businesses.

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) under s59-75 of the Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 is being implemented to tackle this issue in a number of areas in the borough. This includes Three Colt Street.

The PSPO gives the police and council officers additional powers to take enforcement action and in the last 2 months, Tower Hamlets Enforcement officers (THEOs) have used these powers to give three ASB Warnings, issue one Community Protection Notice Warning and one Fixed Penalty Notice.

Tackling ASB and reducing its impact on victims is a major priority and the council will continue to work proactively with the police and our residents to address this issue.

9.14 Question from Councillor Kahar Chowdhury

With the recent approval of planning application of Chrisp Street Market Regeneration, will Mayor John Biggs use his best endeavours to canvass options of increasing the quota for social housing?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

The regeneration scheme at Chrisp Street has planning permission for over 35% affordable housing. Within the planning agreement there will be a viability assessment process that enables the level of affordable housing to be increased if the financial viability of the scheme improves sufficiently during the delivery period.

The Mayor and officers will also work with the developer to look at how the proportion of affordable housing can be increased on the scheme beyond the viability process.

We are proud that our borough is delivering more affordable housing than anywhere in the country and if there are viable ways for us to further increase the amount of affordable housing at Chrisp Street we will explore them.

9.15 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Can Mayor Biggs explain what is his definition of building council homes as promised in his election manifesto?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

The Mayor's manifesto commitment to deliver 1,000 new council homes, pledged at the previous election, is now well underway. This does not necessarily require each one to be built by the council, although a lot of them will be.

This is being delivered through infill developments on existing estates, new developments, and bringing homes back under council ownership.

This was an ambitious target but despite opposition councillors opposing applications (i.e. Locksley) for council homes we are making good progress and delivering for families on the waiting list.

In the next four years we will start the delivery of an additional 1,000 new council homes on top of these.

As agreed following the Affordability Commission set up by Mayor Biggs, our aim for rent levels in new council housing is to include a 50:50 mix of social rents and Tower Hamlets Living Rents. This can save some families up to £6,000 compared to when Cllr Khan was Cabinet Member for Housing.

We are campaigning for the Government to properly fund councils to build new council homes, with grant and borrowing capacity and to retain right to buy receipts. We will keep lobbying for more resources and more flexibility.

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