

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

**HELD AT 7.10 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2019**

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

During the meeting the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Decision Sheet is presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Sufia Alam
- Councillor Amina Ali
- Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE

**2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

The following Councillors declared an interest that must be registered (Other Interests) in Agenda Item 5.1, Petition regarding the A12 on the grounds they had interests in property situated close to the A12.

- Councillor Asma Islam
- Councillor Helal Uddin
- Councillor Motin Uz – Zaman.

The following Councillors declared an interest that must be registered (Other Interests) in Agenda item 10.12, a Member Question regarding business rates on the grounds of their employment.

- Councillor Denise Jones
- Councillor Ayas Miah
- Councillor Harun Miah

**3. MINUTES**

**DECISION:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 23 January 2019 and the Budget Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record subject to minor amendments in respect of recorded votes cast and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

**(Action by: Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services)**

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

Please see the minutes.

**5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS****5.1 Petition regarding the A12.**

Iana Vidal 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.

**DECISION**

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

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place).

**5.2 Petition regarding New Providence Wharf Cladding**

Mira Patel 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.

**DECISION**

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

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place).

**5.3 Petition calling on the Council to Declare a Climate Emergency and become carbon neutral by 2025**

Rachel Ellman and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

**DECISION**

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

**(Action by:** Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place).

## 6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented his report to the Council. Councillor Andrew Wood, Leader of the Conservative Group, then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

## 7. YOUNG MAYOR'S UPDATE

The Young Mayor reported on his term of office. Members then responded briefly to his statement.

## 8. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

### 8 – Administration Motion regarding Councils at Breaking Point

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Candida Ronald **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

### DECISION:

This Council notes that many council budgets are now at Breaking Point. Austerity has caused huge damage to communities up and down the UK, with devastating effects on key public services that protect the most defenceless in society – children at risk, disabled adults and vulnerable older people – and the services we all rely on;

1. Tory cuts mean councils have lost 60p out of every £1 that the last Labour Government was spending on local government in 2010;
2. Councils had to spend an extra £800m last year to meet the demand on vital services to protect children by over;
3. With an ageing population and growing demand adult social care faces a gap of £3.5 billion – with only 14% of council workers now confident that vulnerable local residents are safe and cared for
4. Government cuts have seen over 500 children's centres and 475 libraries close, potholes are left unfilled, and 80% of councils workers now say have no confidence in the future of local services
5. Northamptonshire has already gone bust due to Tory incompetence at both national and local level, and more councils are predicted to collapse without immediate emergency funding
6. Councils now face a further funding gap of £7.8 billion by 2025 just to keep services 'standing still' and meeting additional demand. Even Lord Gary Porter, the Conservative Chair of the Local Government Association, has said 'Councils can no longer be expected to run our vital local services on a shoestring'
7. Tower Hamlets has lost 64% of its core government funding since 2010 that's £148 million with a further cut of £44 million over the next three years.
8. Despite this we have protected frontline services and are investing in a tackling poverty fund.

9. The Fair Funding Review poses a threat to inner city borough with high levels of deprivation like Tower Hamlets.

This Council notes that Prime Minister Theresa May has also claimed that “austerity is over” despite planning a further £1.3bn of cuts to council budgets.

It notes that we have lost over 200 police officers from the streets of Tower Hamlets and the council has had to step in and invest £3 million to pay for council funded police officers so increasingly there are areas where the council is having to step in.

This Council agrees with the aims of the ‘Breaking Point’ petition signed by Labour councillors across the country, in calling for the Prime Minister and Chancellor to truly end austerity in local government by:

1. Reversing cuts to council budgets, with the Local Government Association warning that many popular council services could disappear by 2025 due to a £8bn funding black hole;
2. Investing £2bn in children’s services and £2bn in adult social care to stop these vital emergency services from collapsing;
3. Restoring council funding to 2010 levels over the next four years.

This Council resolves to:

1. Support the ‘Breaking Point’ campaign, recognising the devastating impact that austerity has had on our local community;
2. Ask the Mayor to respond to the Government consultation ‘A review of local authorities’ relative needs and resources’ and continue to make the case for Tower Hamlets to be protected against moves by the Government to introduce a so called ‘Fair Funding Review’ which could see funding diverted from areas of high deprivation.

**(Action by: Mayor’s Office/Neville Murton, Corporate Director, Resources)**

**9. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE****9 – Opposition Motion by the Conservative Group regarding Planning Appeal losses.**

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

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

**10. 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.

- 10.1 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin regarding the council's new graffiti and street art policy. No supplementary question was asked.
- 10.2 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood regarding a child safeguarding matter.
- 10.3 Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed regarding the provision of a zebra crossing in front of Kobi Nazrul Primary School. No supplementary question was asked.
- 10.4 Question from Councillor Peter Golds concerning infrastructure on the Isle of Dogs.
- 10.5 Question from Councillor Krysten Perry about investment in local police staff. No supplementary question was asked.
- 10.6 Question from Councillor Marc Francis regarding action to deal with missed recycling collection
- 10.7 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze about measures to tackle ASB and drug crime in Whitechapel.
- 10.8 Question from Councillor James King about progress with the structural repair of Malting and Brewster Houses in Limehouse.
- 10.9 Question from Councillor Dan Tomlinson about the impact of the Fair Funding Review on the Council's budget. No supplementary question was asked.
- 10.10 Question from Councillor Puru Miah regarding action to address knife crime following a stabbing off Salmon Lane. No supplementary question was asked.

10.11 Question from Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain about Operation Continuum and its recent progress. No supplementary question was asked.

10.12 Question from Councillor Harun Miah about Business Rates increases since 2015. No supplementary question was asked.

10.13 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan regarding the future of the Community Language Service. No supplementary question was asked.

## **11. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**

### **11.1 Localism Act 2011 - Pay Policy Statement 2019/20**

The Council considered a report of the General Purposes Committee on the Pay Policy Statement 2019-20.

#### **DECISION:**

1. That the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 be agreed.

**(Action by:** Neville Murton, Corporate Director, Resources)

## **12. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **12.1 Members' Allowance Scheme 2019/20**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance proposing the adoption of the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2019/20.

#### **DECISION:**

1. That the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Members' Allowances Scheme 2019 be adopted as set out at Appendix A to the report

**(Action by:** Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)

## 12.2 Committee Calendar 2019/20

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance proposing a Calendar of Meetings for 2019/20

Councillor Kevin Brady **moved** the following amendment to the report:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2019/20 as set out in Appendix A.
2. The exception to the above Recommendation is to retain the current 5 Ordinary Council meetings per year on the dates as set out in Paragraph 3.8 of the report.
3. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to agree any changes to Committee meeting dates required in relation to Recommendation 2 and to delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.

The amendments to the recommendations in the report were **agreed**.

### **DECISION:**

1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2019/20 as set out in Appendix A.
2. The exception to the above Recommendation is to retain the current 5 Ordinary Council meetings per year on the dates as set out in Paragraph 3.8 of the report.
3. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to agree any changes to Committee meeting dates required in relation to Recommendation 2 and to delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.

**(Action by:** Asmat Hussain Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)

**13. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL****13.1 Motion regarding the All - Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia**

Councillor Tarik Khan **moved** and Councillor Puru Miah **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

**DECISION:**

Tower Hamlets Council Notes:

1. The publication by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims, "Islamophobia Defined". A Report on the inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia / anti-Muslim hatred
2. The report was the result of a six month long inquiry heard from academics, lawyers, activists, victim groups and British Muslim organisations, as well as first-hand accounts from communities in Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham and London.
3. The APPG on British Muslims received countless submissions detailing the racialised manner in which the Muslimness of an individual was used to attack Muslims or those perceived to be Muslims. The racialisation of Muslims proceeds on the basis of their racial and religious identity, or perceived identity, from white converts receiving racialised sobriquets such as "paki", Muslim women attacked due to their perceived dress, bearded men attacked for the personification of a Muslim identity or even turban wearing Sikhs attacked due to the perception of Muslimness.
4. The APPG on British Muslims strongly encourage the government, political parties, statutory bodies, public and private institutions to adopt this definition in helping to achieve a fairer society for all, as it believes the conclusion to the inquiry will become the benchmark for defining and tackling the scourge of Islamophobia.

Tower Hamlets Council Resolves:

1. To adopt the working definition on Islamophobia as recommended by the APPG on British Muslims:

"Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness".

2. Therefore becoming one of the first local authorities to adopt the working definition on Islamophobia.

**(Action by:** Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)

(Motions 13.2 and 13.3 were not considered due to lack of time).

## 14. URGENT MOTIONS

The Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to enable the following urgent motion to be debated without notice:

### 14.1 Motion regarding the terror attack in New Zealand

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Asma Begum **seconded**, the motion as tabled.

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

This Council notes:

1. The appalling terror attack which took place in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 15th March 2019, in which 50 people died and over 20 people were injured;
2. That there have been a number of other terror attacks in recent months against people of other faiths and none;
3. That the men, women and children in Christchurch were targeted simply because of their faith;
4. That a number of vigils were held at mosques, including here in Tower Hamlets, to show support and solidarity to Muslim communities around the world and that the solidarity of our community is reassuring but cannot be taken for granted;
5. That our community has repeatedly been attacked by those who seek to divide us. With the anniversary of the Brick Lane bomb upon us, we are reminded of our vulnerability and need to always be vigilant;
6. That while many aspects of life for British Muslims have improved in recent years instances of Islamophobia and hate attacks on Muslims remain a continuing issue in our community;
7. That the dissemination of hate messages and graphic images promoting extreme causes on the internet is a new and unregulated aspect of modern life, and that this is reinforced by the continued promotion of negative images in 'mainstream' media too;
8. That while the Christchurch attacks targeted Muslims, other minority groups face attack too, at different times and in different ways, but we note that there have been a number of attacks on places of worship of different faiths in recent years.

This Council believes:

1. Those who seek to divide us must never succeed, and we stand together against hatred as we have always done in Tower Hamlets;
2. That the council should send an unequivocal message of support to the people of New Zealand and to Muslim communities around the world to make it clear that Tower Hamlets stands with them.
3. That 21<sup>st</sup> March is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and this should be marked each year by the council.
4. That the council should mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Brick Lane bomb this year.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Mayor to write to the Mayor of Christchurch to express sympathy and solidarity on behalf of Tower Hamlets;
2. To ask the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, to call for better regulation of the media and social media to guard against racism and the spread of hate, and to emphasise the need to combat the dangerous role that the media and the internet can play in radicalisation;
3. To hold a one minute's silence;
4. To continue to work with our faith communities;
5. To confirm that we will always celebrate the diversity that makes us stronger and stand united against hatred.
6. To refer this motion to the Community Safety Partnership and ask them to consider what additional, practical steps can be taken, including calling for additional police resource to be made available to local mosques, and supporting and working with local places of worship to review their security arrangements, including whether physical security like barriers can be arranged and ensuring that all places of worship have given proper consideration to their security arrangements.

**(Action by** Mayor's Office, Sharon Godman, Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Partnership, Denise Radley, Corporate Director (Health, Adults and Community)

The meeting ended at 10.04 p.m.