

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES 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****Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs	Councillor Tarik Khan
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Councillor James King
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Eve McQuillan
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Shah Ameen	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Puru Miah
Councillor Rachel Blake	Councillor Victoria Obaze
Councillor Kevin Brady	Councillor Mohammed Pappu
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Councillor Kyrsten Perry
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Councillor Leema Qureshi
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Councillor Dan Tomlinson
Councillor Danny Hassell	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Asma Islam	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Val Whitehead
Councillor Denise Jones	Councillor Bex White
Councillor Rabina Khan	Councillor Andrew Wood

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

During the meeting, the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Minutes are presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda. The order the business was taken in at the meeting was as follows:

- Item 1 - Apologies for absence.
- Item 2 – Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
- Item 3 – Minutes.
- Item 14.1 – Urgent Motion regarding the terror attack in New Zealand
- Item 4 – Announcements.
- Item 5.3 - Petition calling on the Council to declare a Climate Emergency and become carbon neutral by 2025.
- Item 5.1 – Petition regarding the A12
- Item 5.2 - Petition regarding New Providence Wharf Cladding
- Item 7 – Young Mayor’s Update.

- Item 6 - Mayor's Report.
- Item 8 – Administration Motion Debate.
- Item 9 – Opposition Motion Debate.
- Item 10 – Members Questions.
- Item 11 – Reports from the Executive and the Council's Committees
- Item 12 – Other Business.
- Item 13.1 - Motion regarding the All Party Parliamentary Group working definition of Islamaphobia.

The Speaker stated that everyone was shocked and saddened by the appalling events in New Zealand last Friday. On behalf of the Council, he stated that they stood together in solidarity with those affected by the events and expressed condemnation to those who carried out such acts. The Council's thoughts and prayers were with all those affected by the tragic events.

The Council then rose to observe a minutes silence to remember those affected by the atrocity.

Procedural Motion

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Asma Begum **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.5, Rule 13.1 be suspended to enable an urgent motion regarding the terrorist attacks in New Zealand to be considered". The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

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

- A commemorative event marking Martyr's Day and International Mother Language Day at Altab Ali Park.
- Travelling to Bangladesh to meet local representatives and the Prime Minister, promoting relations with the Borough.
- Accompanying fellow civic head on the annual London Mayor's Walk.
- Awards Ceremonies in the Borough.
- Carrying out preparations for yesterday's final fundraising event that was a great success. The Speaker thanked everyone who participated in this.

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

RESOLVED:

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.

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

The Speaker paid tribute to Liam Kane, the former Chief Executive of the East London Business Alliance who had sadly passed away. He would be remembered for his passion for supporting the local community, helping young people and tackling equality. He passed on the Council's condolences to his family and friends.

The Chief Executive was pleased to report the following success stories:

- The Violence Against Women and Girls, Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime Team had been awarded team of the year at the Local Government Chronical Awards.
- That the work of the Hostel Commissioning Team, as well as Tower Hamlets Homes and the 'Love Your Neighbourhood initiative' also received recognition at the awards.
- That Tower Hamlets Homes had been shortlisted for a number of other national awards.

Turning to staffing issues, he reported that the Council were about to commence the process of recruiting to the roles of Divisional Director, Housing and Divisional Director, Planning & Building Control. He thanked Mark Baigent and Owen Whalley, for their services to the Council and their dedication to their roles. He also expressed gratitude to Beverley McKenzie, the Head of Member Services, who would be leaving the Council shortly for her contributions to the Council

He also reported on the latest Ofsted Visit. The formal inspection would take place later in the year.

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. He confirmed that the Council had implemented a number of measures to help mitigate the impacts from the A12 on air quality and pollution levels. This included launching the Breath Clean campaign, and introducing a 20mph speed limit on Borough roads.

He also provided a brief update on TfL's plans to carry out road improvements on sections of the A12 in the Borough. He stated that he would be happy to speak to the petitioners to consider further their concerns and how the Council could further influence the improvements works.

RESOLVED:

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

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. He agreed with the petitioners points about the urgent need to remove any fire hazards from the development and the freeholders duties in terms of removing unsafe cladding. He advised that the Council had been working with private landlords regarding fire safety matters and the freeholder for this particular development had given reassurances regarding their plans to complete the necessary works within a timeframe. The Council would monitor progress with these actions.

RESOLVED

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

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. She thanked the petitioners, especially the school children for presenting the petition, demonstrating why the problem of climate change should be taken seriously in the Borough.

On behalf of the Council, she declared a climate emergency in the Borough and highlighted a number of Council initiatives, including a new action plan, to reduce carbon omissions.

She also urged the community to keep up its efforts to help address this issue

RESOLVED

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

Procedural Motion

Councillor Kevin Brady **moved** a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that item 7, the Young Mayor’s Update be considered as the next item of business”. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

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 shared his experiences on his term in office, highlighting his initial aims for the two year term.

He then highlighted a number of key achievements around:

- Supporting changes to the Young Mayor’s team to improve accessibility and participation.
- Working with the Youth Council to provide a range of initiatives such as safeguarding events, and workshops on key issues.
- Working closely with a range of other young people’s groups at a local and national level to represent young people and influence change.

He hoped that such work would continue and that the Young Mayor's scheme would have an even greater impact on the community in the future.

In response, the Mayor and Councillors thanked the Young Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for acting as such positive advocates for young people and for carrying out such outstanding work

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**.

RESOLVED:

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.

Council's at Breaking Point (Motion)	
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	For
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	For
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	For
Councillor Shah Ameen	For
Councillor Asma Begum	For
Mayor John Biggs	For
Councillor Rachel Blake	For
Councillor Kevin Brady	For
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	For
Councillor David Edgar	For
Councillor Marc Francis	For
Councillor Peter Golds	Against
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	For
Councillor Danny Hassell	For
Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain	For
Councillor Asma Islam	For
Councillor Sirajul Islam	For
Councillor Denise Jones	For
Councillor Rabina Khan	Abstain
Councillor Tarik Khan	For

Councillor James King	For
Councillor Eve McQuillan	For
Councillor Ayas Miah	For
Councillor Harun Miah	For
Councillor Puru Miah	For
Councillor Victoria Obaze	For
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	For
Councillor Kyrsten Perry	For
Councillor John Pierce	For
Councillor Leema Qureshi	For
Councillor Zenith Rahman	For
Councillor Candida Ronald	For
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	For
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	For
Councillor Helal Uddin	For
Councillor Abdal Ullah	For
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	For
Councillor Val Whitehead	For
Councillor Bex White	For
Councillor Andrew Wood	Against
Carried	

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**.

Planning Appeal Losses. (Motion)	
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Against
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Against
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Against
Councillor Shah Ameen	Against
Councillor Asma Begum	Against
Mayor John Biggs	Against
Councillor Rachel Blake	Against
Councillor Kevin Brady	Against
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Against
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Against
Councillor David Edgar	Against
Councillor Marc Francis	Against
Councillor Peter Golds	For
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Against

Councillor Danny Hassell	Against
Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain	Against
Councillor Asma Islam	Against
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Against
Councillor Denise Jones	Against
Councillor Rabina Khan	Abstain
Councillor Tarik Khan	Against
Councillor James King	Against
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Against
Councillor Ayas Miah	Against
Councillor Harun Miah	Against
Councillor Puru Miah	Against
Councillor Victoria Obaze	Against
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	Against
Councillor John Pierce	Against
Councillor Leema Qureshi	Against
Councillor Zenith Rahman	Against
Councillor Candida Ronald	Against
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	Against
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	Against
Councillor Helal Uddin	Against
Councillor Abdal Ullah	Against
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	Against
Councillor Val Whitehead	Against
Councillor Bex White	Against
Councillor Andrew Wood	For
Rejected	

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, relevant Executive Member, or Committee Chair.

10.1 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

Can the cabinet member outline the council's new graffiti and street art policy?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment:

The policy was recently adopted by the Mayor in Cabinet. It addresses what I think is a growing problem in the borough of dealing with the level of graffiti that people often find unattractive and believe has an impact on the environment. The new policy sets out the approach to tackling graffiti and the way in which we prioritise graffiti which is racist or otherwise offensive and details how we make those decisions. It also provides a good account of the work that is being done and the way we are trying to catch up with the backlog that has built up. It talks about the pressures we are applying to Veolia to make sure we do a better job. It also sets out how the Mayor put more money in the budget to graffiti removal teams, so we will have more graffiti removal teams in the new financial year, which I think will be a very useful way of tackling the backlog. What it also did was to recognise that there are some pieces of street art which most people would agree on. It sets out a framework for making decisions on those, so we get a proper balance between removing unsightly graffiti and recognising that some of it is attractive as street art.

No supplementary question was asked.

10.2 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Why was the Serious Case Review for baby 'Elias' only released in February 2019 when he died approximately 31 months earlier. Given that the Local Safeguarding Children's Board should aim for completion of a Serious Case Review within six months of initiating it according to guidance issued by the Department of Education in March 2015.

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

This is clearly a very tragic case. The Government's guidance suggests that Serious Case Reviews should be completed within six months unless they are complex cases. Often the level of complexity is not identified until mid-way through that process. This was certainly the case for two of the most recently published serious case reviews. There were a number of factors that contributed to serious delays. They included:

- Identifying the right independent reviewers with the necessary expertise from a national pool.

- A drift in the set-up process between the Council's Procurement Provider and the individual reviewers
- Further unexpected delays arose from the impact of IR35 tax legislation

However, I would like to assure the council, as is the case with serious case reviews, that we have made sure that the learning is considered and we have already taken steps including:

- Ceasing to have a social work team at the Royal London Hospital.
- Adopted clearer, pan-London guidance.
- Developing better relationships with schools and processes for escalating.
- We have increased management oversight of cases significantly.
- We have increased workforce stability, reducing the number of agency workers, and providing better support to student social workers.

Supplementary question from Councillor Wood:

Do you think it would be a good idea for Overview and Scrutiny to be given updates on serious case review and progress without receiving lots of detail. One of the issues is that we were not aware of these cases until after they were published.

Councillor Hassell's response to the supplementary question.

The government are changing the regulations for safeguarding children's boards and partnerships and how serious case reviews are undertaken. I am quite happy to work with Overview and Scrutiny and find a way we can report mechanisms around start and end dates, working with the local children's safeguarding boards or the successor partnership.

10.3 Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed

There have been ongoing requests for a zebra crossing in front of Kobi Nazrul Primary School. This was raised a number of times. What are the updates and time frame for this happening? A number of visits also took place by both the Mayor and Cllr Edgar to the area in question.

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment:

I have visited the school and I have talked to a number of staff at the school and local residents and parents who are concerned about it. The school is one that is being included in the new School Street Programme for delivery of works in 2019/20. The main objective of that programme is to make the area around schools safer and easier for children to navigate. Within that programme the school will undergo an assessment to identify the best way to address the issues. It may be that a zebra crossing will provide the best solution, but there will be a feasibility study to inform the scope of the work that is done there. It is a school along with many other schools where we are trying to improve pupil safety and making a contribution to addressing the problem of air quality and air pollution.

No supplemental question was asked.

10.4 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

Will the Mayor provide an update on how much of the £98.6 million that the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework (Development Infrastructure Funding Study) finalised in November 2017 said had to be spent by the end of this month, has actually been spent on new infrastructure to support growth in the area?

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

The figure that you present we are assuming has been established by granular data from 2017 – 18 and 2018 – 19. Officers have undertaken a similar exercise and have found that the total is closer to £280million. £210 million of this is for the delivery by other bodies, such as developers, utility providers and TfL. £194million of that is actually for the TfL led Network, strategic transport projects, of the Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf Bridge. We are working in partnership with those organisations in order to bring forward the delivery of these projects. Of the approximately £70 million associated with local delivery, £48million is for education with £22m for other social infrastructure.

Supplementary question from Councillor Golds:

The figures of course are based on the hiring of Peter Brett who the GLA themselves hired and they produced a report in 2017 which was then published in May 2018, but in that intervening period, the Council were quite aware of these figures. Our concern is that a number of them, and I have got them in front of me, which is where we get the figure of £98million from, were marked critical, essential, high and desirable. In particular, £19 million of the figures announced in 2017/18 and 2018/19 were those that were identified as critical. This is our concern and I would like to know your observations on that.

Councillor Blake's response to the supplementary question:

Clearly the scale of infrastructure needed on the Isle of Dogs is critical. That is why the scale of the investment planned is increasing over time, and not least in the next few years. We will be starting a Borough wide programme for investment in the public realm. Next year, it is anticipated to be £36.49 million. Significant amounts of this are expected to be spent on the Isle of Dogs. It is important to recognise the role of all of the partners that will be involved in this kind of delivery. That is why Mayor John Biggs has led on bringing together the various partners: TfL, GLA, utilities as well as housing developers to get round the table to focus on this kind of deliver and to take this matter as seriously as it should be taken.

10.5 Question from Councillor Kyrsten Perry

Can the Lead Member please give me an update about the council's investment in police staff locally in Tower Hamlets, particularly the staff addressing anti-social behaviour?

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

We know the impact that anti-social behaviour can have on residents. By working with partners we are addressing this. Our budget committed to making Tower Hamlets a cleaner, safer and fairer borough. Despite our core funding being cut, I am proud that our Labour budget allocated 148million to the ASB team, and we have now six ASB investigators instead of four.

No supplementary question was asked.

10.6 Question from Councillor Marc Francis:

To ask the Lead Member for Environmental Services what action is being taken to deal with Veolia's persistent missed recycling collections in Bow East ward?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment:

Residents and ward Councillors have been insidious in letting me know about the problems that there have been in some parts of that ward with recycling collections. I have been very unhappy with their level of performance. What the Council has been doing, over the last six months is increasing its monitoring of the recycling collection rates. It has been increasing the levels of fines imposed on Veolia, its contractor for failing to provide the services that it should do. Those measures which has been illustrated by your walk, tell us that all that is not enough. A bigger exercise is being undertaken which is to look at the entire collection rounds across the Borough to make sure that they can be reorganised in a much more efficient and balanced way to improve collections across the borough. That new set of the recycling rounds is due to come in by the 8 April 2019. Letters have just been sent to those affected by it. A reminder will go out on 5 April. I am very keen to ensure that this makes a difference and I will be watching very carefully to ensure that it does.

Supplementary question from Councillor Francis:

Can I thank the Lead Member for that response and the positive intervention, and also the intervention that officers are trying to make to ensure that Veolia adheres to the terms of the contract for the final year. I am really pleased to see that we are getting rid of Veolia and the service is being brought back in house. That is something that Councillor Edgar has argued for in the past. I note the change to the routes and I think that will be part of the solution. The other part of the solution would be the Council proactively monitoring.

Can he give the ward Councillors an assurance that proactive monitoring will take place on the recycling collection days, in the Bow East ward for the first month or so of implementing the rounds to ensure that Veolia is collecting it and we are not relying on the public to report missed collections to us.

Councillor Edgar's response to the supplementary question.

I can give an assurance that there will be monitoring of recycling collection performance on a daily basis. We should not be in a situation where residents have to report such things. We must have systems to allow us to manage it, making sure that when Veolia is still with us, they are doing the job well. I will be taking a very keen and close interest in that. Where there are problems that remain, I am very happy to hear from Councillors across the Borough who may want to draw particular problems to me. I very much hope that these new rounds that have been put together in a much more thoughtful way and a more sensible way, will go a long way to addressing the problems.

10.7 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze

Can the Mayor or Lead Member tell us what measures are being taken to tackle ASB and drug crime in Whitechapel ward?

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

Issues in Whitechapel Ward are regularly discussed and monitored at the weekly Operational Tasking meeting, which allocates the Council funded Police officers, to address our priorities. Both myself and the Mayor, and ward Councillors attended public meetings organised by the residents and the TRA. The tasking meeting is chaired by the Council and comprises other partners such as the Police and Housing Associations. In the last six months in Whitechapel, there have been: 32 arrests, 27 ASB warnings issued, 11 vehicles processed and 1 drugs address closed. Intelligence from CCTV also leads to around 3 arrests a day, across the borough and we will continue to make community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour a key priority.

Supplementary question from Councillor Obaze:

When will the next visit take place?

Councillor Begum's response to the supplementary question.

Both myself and the Mayor are organising two dates to meet the TRAs.

10.8 Question from Councillor James King

Can the Mayor update me on progress to preparations for the structural repair of Malting and Brewster Houses in Limehouse ward?

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

Malting and Brewster House underwent a Fire Risk assessment which found the cladding to be in the substantial risk category – though I should be clear it was not ACM cladding. In 2018, the cladding was removed from the building. A further specialist survey found that structural strengthening works need to be completed before the replacement cladding can be added.

The Council, with support from Tower Hamlets Homes, is appointing appropriate contractors to carry out the structural strengthening works required on these two high rise blocks as part of our Better Neighbourhoods programme.

Detailed contract documents and specifications are being drawn up with a view to commence the works in April. Residents and the Tenants & Resident Association have been regularly updated on the progress of investigation and works proposals.

The Council is dedicated to keeping the lines of communication open, ensuring that residents and councillors continue to be fully consulted and informed throughout the period of works.

Supplementary question from Councillor King:

The structural repair of Malting and Brewster House will be a significant outlay for the Council, so can you tell me what advice and reassurance the Council has received before moving on with this project?

Councillor Islam's response to the supplementary question.

As I said in my earlier response, specialist structural engineers have looked at the strengthening work. As per the recommendations, the proposed work will be carried from April.

10.9 Question from Councillor Dan Tomlinson

Could the Mayor or Cabinet member provide an update on the potential impact of the Fair Funding Review on the Council's budget?

Response of Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector.

The Government's fair funding review looks set to be anything but fair. Areas like ours face further potential cuts, after almost a decade of Tory austerity. The Government has just closed its initial consultation on the funding formulae. Unusually, that consultation did not include any exemplifications, making it impossible to gauge how resources diverted from one part of the system will be reallocated to another. 2019 also sees the next spending review, setting out the total funding envelope for local authorities, from 2020-21. So the impact on spending from the review on the overall resource levels

combined with the reweighting of fair funding means that it's not possible to make any income projections with any degree of certainty. However, noise is coming out of the Ministry to suggest that there will be less weight for deprivation and population growth. Both of which will have a major negative impact on this Council. Fair funding looks like the typical Tory sleight of hand, expecting Councils to do more, while cutting funding to the bone.

No supplementary question was asked.

10.10 Question from Councillor Puru Miah

Can the Lead Member for Community Safety tell me what additional measures have been taken by the Council and other agencies, following the stabbing off Salmon Lane, of a teenager on the 21st February 2019?

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

I am absolutely committed to making our streets safer for all of our residents especially young people. I can confirm the stabbing is still under investigation by the police. Two knives were recovered from the scene and are being assessed for forensic examination. Police have made an arrest in connection with the stabbing. High visibility policing has been deployed in the Salmon Lane area and the Police and council are both supporting the victim.

Since the stabbing the police have increased weapon sweeps and their focus on habitual knife carriers. They have conducted a week of action targeting knife crime along with the rest of London.

To tackle knife crime more broadly we have developed a Partnership Knife Crime Action Plan. The Plan includes 65 activities and it reports back to the community partnership board.

No supplementary question was asked.

10.11 Question from Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain

Can the cabinet member please update members about Operation Continuum and its recent progress?

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

Recently we have taken Operation Continuum to Cabinet to roll out this programme for the next year. It is an ongoing programme and there are plans to have another initiative in the future.

No supplementary question was asked.

10.12 Question from Councillor Harun Miah:

Can Mr Mayor inform us of the percentage increase in Business Rates since 2015.

Response of Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector.

As a small business owner you will know that business rates are set by Central Government with a multiplier that is applied to the rateable value determined by the valuation agency, an independent body. Property valuations are updated on a five year cycle .So rates increase each year by a CPI – 0.8% in 2016, 8.7% in 2017, and 3% in 2018 and 2.3% in 2019. The 8.7% was a result of a government revaluation. Overall yields from business rates have decreased whilst assessments have risen. This is due to changes in the way properties are valued, since the new valuation list came into force, including some court decisions that have been detrimental to the tax base,

No supplementary question was asked.

10.13 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Following the February Budget Meeting can the Mayor outline the steps he has taken to address the Community Language Service Petitioners concerns that the service would be gradually closed through the new proposals that were put forward within the budget?

Response of Mayor John Biggs:

As you know from the Budget meeting, there are no plans to end support for the community language teaching in the borough. Given the scale of government cuts, we do need as with other services to consider other ways to deliver it. No matter how many ways you suggest otherwise, we have no intention of stopping community language provision in our borough. Whilst the tory government cuts to the budget mean that no service can be immune from savings, our budget proposal agreed by the Council included only a small saving for 19/20 for the CLS, which can be achieved through the management of staff vacancies. In years 2 and 3 of the proposed savings, we will engage with community groups in a full consultation on any changes with the aim of improving the quality of, consistency and value for money of the service. The savings are indicative and all options will be considered before any final decisions are made.

No supplemental 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.

RESOLVED:

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

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.

RESOLVED:

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

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**.

RESOLVED:

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.

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**.

RESOLVED:

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.

All - Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia (Motion)	
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	For
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	For
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	For
Councillor Shah Ameen	For
Councillor Asma Begum	For
Mayor John Biggs	For
Councillor Rachel Blake	For
Councillor Kevin Brady	For
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	For
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	For
Councillor David Edgar	For
Councillor Marc Francis	For
Councillor Peter Golds	For
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	For
Councillor Danny Hassell	For
Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain	For
Councillor Asma Islam	For
Councillor Sirajul Islam	For
Councillor Denise Jones	For
Councillor Rabina Khan	For
Councillor Tarik Khan	For
Councillor James King	For
Councillor Eve McQuillan	For
Councillor Ayas Miah	For
Councillor Harun Miah	For
Councillor Puru Miah	For
Councillor Victoria Obaze	For
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	For
Councillor Kyrsten Perry	For
Councillor John Pierce	For
Councillor Leema Qureshi	For
Councillor Zenith Rahman	For
Councillor Candida Ronald	For
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	For
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	For
Councillor Helal Uddin	For
Councillor Abdal Ullah	For
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	For
Councillor Val Whitehead	For
Councillor Bex White	For
Councillor Andrew Wood	For
Carried	

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**.

RESOLVED:

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 21st 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 20th 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.

Terror Attack in New Zealand (Motion)	
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	For
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	For
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	For
Councillor Shah Ameen	For
Councillor Asma Begum	For
Mayor John Biggs	For
Councillor Rachel Blake	For
Councillor Kevin Brady	For
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	For
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	For
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	For
Councillor David Edgar	For
Councillor Peter Golds	For
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	For
Councillor Danny Hassell	For
Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain	For
Councillor Asma Islam	For
Councillor Sirajul Islam	For
Councillor Denise Jones	For
Councillor Rabina Khan	For
Councillor Tarik Khan	For
Councillor James King	For
Councillor Eve McQuillan	For
Councillor Ayas Miah	For
Councillor Harun Miah	For
Councillor Puru Miah	For

Councillor Victoria Obaze	For
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	For
Councillor Kyrsten Perry	For
Councillor John Pierce	For
Councillor Leema Qureshi	For
Councillor Zenith Rahman	For
Councillor Candida Ronald	For
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	For
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	For
Councillor Helal Uddin	For
Councillor Abdal Ullah	For
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	For
Councillor Val Whitehead	For
Councillor Bex White	For
Councillor Andrew Wood	For
Carried	

The meeting ended at 10.04 p.m.

Speaker of the Council