

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 23 MAY 2018****THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG****Members Present:**

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

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Sabina Akhtar in the Chair**1. ELECTION OF SPEAKER**

The Speaker of the Council, Sabina Akhtar addressed the meeting about her year of office. She thanked Mayor John Biggs and Councillors for giving her this opportunity. She congratulated Councillor Ayas Miah on his nomination as the new Speaker of the Council and wished him the very best for the year ahead.

She stated that she had the honour of attending over 300 engagements and had made every effort to visit groups rather than invite them to the Town Hall to see their work.

Some of the highlights included:

- A visit to Bangladesh to meet local dignitaries including the Prime Minister and the President.
- A Royal Gun Salute at Buckingham Palace to mark the state visit of the King and Queen of Spain.
- Celebration event to mark the return of the Old Flo statue to the borough.
- Citizenship ceremonies.
- A very memorable visit to Richard House that supported vulnerable people in society.
- Fundraising activities in support of the Annual Poppy Appeal.
- Army engagements and sporting events including the Great River Race.
- A commemoration event to name a boat 'Speaker Sabina'.

With reference to her focus on young people, she reported that she had the honour of engaging with them in a variety of ways from school visits and achievement ceremonies, to sports and cultural events, speaking challenges and local democracy week.

She was pleased to say that she held a very successful Charity Ball in December. She thanked all of the people and organisations who supported this event, in particular the Canary Wharf Group and MEARS who were the main sponsors.

Following the Speaker's address, Councillors Peter Golds, Asma Islam and Candida Ronald thanked Councillor Akhtar for all she had achieved in her year in office as the first female Bengali Speaker of the Council. They praised in particular the personal qualities she had brought to the role and her ability to chair Council meetings effectively.

Mayor John Biggs also addressed the meeting. He echoed the above sentiments. He added that it was great to see a young person take up the role of Speaker of the Council and hoped that she would inspire others to step forward for public office.

The Speaker then called for nominations to serve as Speaker of the Council for the coming year.

It was **moved** by Mayor John Biggs, **seconded** by Councillor Asma Begum, and unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Ayas Miah be elected to serve as Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council Meeting in May 2019.

Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Asma Begum then came forward to witness the Speaker of the Council signing the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.50pm and reconvened at 7.55pm.

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

The incoming Speaker, Councillor Ayas Miah thanked the Council for electing him as Speaker. He congratulated Councillor Sabina Akhtar for a successful year in office and her hard work over the last year on behalf of the Council and the borough.

He commented on his long involvement in a number of community based and charitable and human rights organisations. He stated that such groups relied heavily on donations and in view of this, he intended to do all that he could to help his chosen charities.

They were:

- St Hilda's East Community Centre Older People's Project Sporting Foundation
- Dorset Community Association, and the
- Limehouse Project

He intended to support a number of other charities. Details of which he would disclose in due course.

He stated that he hoped to use the experience he had gained over the years, to try and bridge the gap between the Council and the community, to strengthen existing links and promote the council's aims and values.

To help him with these objectives, he would have as his consorts Mrs Nasima Siddika, Mr Abul Hussain, Mr Asik Rahman and Councillor Shah Shuhel Amin to accompany him on official engagements. Finally, he thanked the residents of his ward St Dunstan's and his family and friends for their overwhelming, continued support and cooperation.

The Mayor and Councillors then congratulated Councillor Miah on his appointment

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker sought nominations to serve as Deputy Speaker of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year. It was **moved** by Mayor John Biggs, **seconded** by Councillor Asma Begum, and:

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Victoria Obaze be elected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council meeting in May 2019.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of

- Councillor Bex White

4. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

The Council's Monitoring Officer provided advice to the Council in respect of agenda item 12, Members Allowance Scheme. Members were advised that the Standards (Advisory) Committee had granted a general dispensation to all Councillors to be present, speak and vote on the determination of allowances, travel expenses, payment or indemnity to all Councillors. As a result, Members did not need need to declare any interests in relation to agenda item 12 and might participate and vote.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 21 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

The Chief Executive addressed the meeting.

He thanked Members, officers and political parties for ensuring that the milestones for the 2018 Mayoral and local election were reached and overcome successfully. The Council had also received a positive visit from

Ofsted, had been shortlisted for two MJ awards and were preparing for the Local Government Association Peer challenge in June

He welcomed Warwick Tomsett to the Council as the new Joint Director of Integrated Commissioning who would start in July 2018. This was a joint appointment with the Clinical Commissioning Group. He also welcomed Richard Baldwin, the new Director of Children's Social Care. He thanked Nancy Meehan for her significant contributions to the Council as the Interim Divisional Director of Children's Social Care

7. **MAYOR'S CABINET AND EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer (circulated in a supplementary agenda) setting out the Mayor's Cabinet appointments and other arrangements in respect of Executive Decision Making.

The recommendation was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED

1. That the Mayor's Executive Decision Making scheme be noted.

8. **PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES ON COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2018/19**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer proposing the establishment of the Council's committees for 2018/19 and setting out the review of proportionality and the allocation of places on those Committees and sub committees.

Councillor Kevin Brady **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the following amendment to the report as **tabled**:

"The Labour Group proposes to amend the report, to increase the number of places on the:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee by two places, taking the total membership to eleven members.
- Audit Committee by one place, taking the total membership to eight members.

An updated table detailing overall proportionality and committee places is below:

GROUP	SEATS (on Council)	PROPORTION ON COUNCIL	ENTITLEMENT (to seats on Committees)
Labour	42	93.33%	67.2 (67)
Conservative	2	4.44%	3.2 (3)
Ungrouped	1	0*	2 (remainder)
	45		72

Committee	Total	Labour	Conservative	Ungrouped
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (plus 6 co-optees)	11	10	1	
Audit Committee	8	7	1	
Development Committee	7	6	1	
Strategic Development Committee	8	7		1
General Purposes Committee	9	8	1	
Licensing Committee	15	14	1	
Pensions Committee	7	6	1	
Standards (Advisory) Committee (plus 5 Co-optees)	7	6		1
TOTALS	72	64	6	2

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

The recommendations as amended were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED

That the Council agrees:

1. The review of proportionality as at section 3 of the report and the allocation of seats on Committees and Panels for the Municipal Year 2018/19 as set out at paragraph 3.6 of the report subject to the following amendment

To increase the number of places on the:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee by two places, taking the total membership to eleven members.
 - Audit Committee by one place, taking the total membership to eight members.
2. The Committees and Sub-Committees established for the municipal year 2018/19, and places be allocated on those Committees and Sub-Committees, as set out at paragraph 3.6 of the report subject to the amendment set out in resolution 1 above in respect of the number of places on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee.
 3. To note the proposed arrangements for the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committees.
 4. That the Corporate Director, Governance be authorised to approve the appointment of Councillors required to fill positions that fall vacant during the municipal year in line with the proportionality arrangements set out in this report.

9. COMMITTEE CALENDAR 2018/19

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer setting out a revised calendar of meetings for the Council, Committees and other meetings for the municipal year 2018/19.

The recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed amended calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2018/19 be approved as set out in Appendix A of the report including amended standard start times where appropriate.
2. That the Corporate Director Governance be delegated 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.

10. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer regarding the appointment of members to the Council's Committees and Panels, and Chairs where appropriate, (including those established under item 8 above).

The list of nominations received was tabled at the meeting.

Following the receipt of two nominations for the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Audit Committee, the nominations were put to the vote and Councillor Abdal Ullah was elected to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Val Whitehead was elected to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee.

Councillor Peter Golds notified the Council of a number of corrections to the tabled list of Conservative Group nominations as set out in the attachment to these minutes.

The recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

1. That members and substitute members be appointed to the committees and sub-committees of the Council and other bodies for the municipal year 2018/19 as set out in the list of tabled nominations as amended at the meeting.
2. That the Chairs of Committees for 2018/19 be appointed from amongst the list of tabled nominations subject to the appointment of Councillor Abdal Ullah to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Val Whitehead to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee.
3. That in relation to any unfilled places within the seats allocated to a particular political group, the Council note that the Corporate Director, Governance has delegated authority subsequently to agree the appointments to those places in accordance with nominations from the relevant political group.

11. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS

The Council considered the report setting out when Special Urgency provisions have been applied to Executive Key Decisions.

The recommendation was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That the report on the use of special urgency provisions in relation to Executive Key Decisions be noted

12. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

(Note: To match the content of the report, the word 'Statutory' was removed from the Appendix)

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer (circulated in a supplementary agenda) regarding the Members' Allowance Scheme.

Councillor Andrew Wood **moved** and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded** the following amendment to the motion as **tabled**:

"In the last months of the previous Council year twenty-three Councillors received a Special Responsibility Allowance SRA (19 Labour, 2 Conservative, 1 Aspire, 1 PATH) which on a full year basis would have cost £247,300 (not including employer National Insurance costs).

Significant savings were achieved last year due to a number of Councillors covering two different roles but who were only paid one SRA. Had every single role been taken up by a different Councillor then 30 Councillors would have been paid £304,600 in total.

Three of these Councillors and £27,300 of the costs were due to leaders of opposition groups also getting an SRA. This will fall to one opposition Councillor receiving £5,000.

With less opposition and more Labour Councillors to spread the workload we do not support the proposed changes by the Labour administration which would increase the annual cost to £375,300 (these costs exclude the Mayor and each Councillors basic Allowance of £10,938 per annum)

It would mean that potentially 28 Labour Councillors would get an SRA up from 19 before the election.

The Conservative Groups proposed amendment is as follows:

1. Two Councillors (not three) getting a substantial increase in SRA so that they can more effectively support the Mayor by being able to work on an almost full-time basis.
2. Some important Committee Chairs are paid less than Chairs of less important committees or Mayoral advisers. We believe SRA's should more closely match responsibility, so we propose to increase the SRA for the Chairs of Pension, Audit, Licensing to £8,000

And reduce the SRA for the Speaker, Mayoral Advisers, Scrutiny Leads and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chairs to £6,000 to better reflect workload.

3. We do not believe we need a Chief Whip, Leader of the Majority Group nor Deputy Speaker and that these roles should be removed as well as one of the three Mayoral advisers
4. That each Committee and Sub-Committee should be covered by a separate Councillor with no duplication of roles.
5. This still provides money for 2 Mayoral Advisers and 2 Scrutiny leads to cover non-committee work (one of these can be the Deputy Speaker).
6. That we save the money from having fewer opposition leaders.

The following is a summary of the different proposals. April 2018 Actual is the SRA's paid in April grossed up for a full year. The April 2018 Maximum Payable would have been the total if every SRA role was filled by a separate Councillor instead of being unfilled or if Cllrs had not done two jobs but been paid once.

	April 2018 Actual	April 2018 Maximum Payable	Administration Proposal	Proposed Amendment by Conservative
Number of recipients in total	23	30	29	25
Number of opposition leaders receiving SRA	3	3	1	1
No. of other SRA recipients	20	27	28	24
Total cost of SRA per annum	£247,300	£304,600	£375,300	£281,000
Opposition leaders SRA p.a.	£27,300	£27,300	£5,000	£5,000
Other SRA recipients p.a.	£220,000	£277,300	£370,300	£276,000

Number of SRA recipients by party

Labour	19		28	24
Conservative	2		1	1
Aspire/PATH	2		0	0

The Conservative proposal would save money compared to the April 2018 Maximum payable option by effectively banking most of the savings created by the removal of most of the opposition leaders.

SCHEDULE 1

Special Responsibility Allowance

The following are specified as the special responsibilities for which special responsibility allowances are payable and the amounts of those allowances:

	Number of recipients	SRA
Mayor	1	£75,000
Deputy Mayor	2	£30,000
Cabinet Members	7	£14,000
Leader of the largest Opposition Group	1	£5,000
Mayoral Advisors	2	£6,000
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1	£14,000
Chair of Scrutiny Sub-Committee (Health, Housing or Grants)	3	£6,000
Lead Member for Scrutiny	2	£6,000
Chair of Development Committee	1	£11,000
Chair of Strategic Development Committee	1	£11,000
Chair of Licensing Committee	1	£8,000
Chair of General Purposes Committee	1	£8,000
Chair of Audit Committee	1	£8,000
Chair of Pensions Committee	1	£8,000
Speaker of Council	1	£8,000

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

The recommendation was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That it be agreed that the updated Special Responsibility Allowances set out in Schedule 1 to the report be added to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Scheme of Members' Allowances 2018/19 with any changes coming into effect from Thursday, 24th May 2018 or the appointment of a Councillor to the Relevant position, whichever is the later.

13. APPOINTMENT OF POLITICAL ADVISORS

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer (circulated in a supplementary agenda) regarding the appointment of Political Advisors.

The recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED

1. That the Council agree to re-establish for the duration of the current administration, posts of political assistant (known as Political Advisors) to those political groups that qualify for such a post in accordance with Section 9 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
2. That in order to contract the total cost of the posts within the budget, this should be on the basis of 1.0 FTE post for the Labour Group and 0.20 FTE for the Conservative Group.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

The Council noted the following matters to be reported to the Annual Council Meeting in accordance with the Council's Constitution procedure rule, Part 4.1 Paragraph 1.1. Accordingly it was

RESOLVED:

That the Council notes

1. That the Mayor shall report to the Council on any appointments to outside bodies, arising from an Executive Decision, at the next available Council meeting.
2. The changes made to the Council's Constitution since the last Annual Council meetings, that have all been reported up to previous Council meeting, as set out below:
 - 19 July 2017 – (Parts 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 5.2)
 - 22 November 2017 – (The Council Procedure Rules and The Member/Officer Relations Protocol)
3. That it had been agreed to move the State of the Borough Debate to a later meeting to allow time for the Freedom of the Borough Award meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.

Speaker of the Council