

# Mayor's Report to Council

21<sup>st</sup> November 2018

John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets

## Key Events/Announcements

**World War One centenary:** Across the borough a number of commemorative events marked the centenary of the end of the First World War. I attended at Tower Hill with the 2 MPs and Speaker but on the day at least 8 events took place at memorials in the Borough.

**Budget:** We continue to develop our budget proposals for next year. These will be formally published, it is intended, just before Christmas. The council has started a consultation so that residents can get involved and help us shape our priorities. The consultation closes on 10 December.

Since the austerity programme began in 2010, planned and implemented by the Conservatives and Lib Dems, Tower Hamlets Council's core funding has been cut by £148m – the equivalent of 64%, and over one third of Council staffing posts have gone. There is no escaping that this means difficult choices.

We have however managed to keep all of our Idea Stores, libraries, leisure centres and children centres open. We've built more affordable homes than anywhere else in the country, launched a ground-breaking tackling poverty fund and invested in fighting crime and anti-social behaviour, including providing funding for additional police officers.

But with yet more government cuts, we constantly have to look at innovative ways to generate additional income, work more closely with our partners and make our services more efficient. A Government 'Fair Funding' review is due in 2019 and we fear that it will be anything but fair to the people of our Borough. I am clear that when the Government says Austerity is at an end, they are not being honest where local services in our Borough are concerned.

**Brexit:** A petition will be presented this evening on the rights of EU citizens to vote in local elections. With major uncertainty around Brexit at the national level, this petition highlights the real impact that the uncertainty has on everyday life, particularly for EU citizens living in the UK. I remain a supporter of a second referendum, and also of the view that EU citizens in our Borough should continue to enjoy the rights they currently enjoy, as part of our community.

**Waste contract:** We have decided to bring the waste and street cleansing contracts back 'in-house', when the current contract ends. Waste and cleansing remain critical local matters and we want to provide an improved service for residents. The waste/cleansing service has been in the private sector for many years. The change will happen from early 2020.

**Child refugees:** I and Cllr Asma Begum attended the kindertransport commemoration event in Central London last week. It was very moving, and a

chance also to greet an old friend, (Lord) Alf Dubs, and show our support for his 'Our Turn' campaign, seeking UK support for resettlement in the UK of 10,000 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. We are proposing to play our part by pledging to welcome an additional 10 unaccompanied refugee children into the borough in the next year, with a review after this to see how we can expand on this.

We have a proud tradition of welcoming people to the East End who have escaped war and persecution, helping them to build a new home here. I am delighted to give Tower Hamlets' backing to the Our Turn campaign by committing to taking an additional 10 unaccompanied refugee children. We all have a moral obligation to help those most in need. We need to balance our local needs against our desire to help more widely but I think we would like to continue support in future years and are calling on Government to match its rhetoric of support and release the necessary funding to make this happen.

**Air Quality Fund:** The second round of funding (more than £120,000) has opened up for community groups, schools, local businesses and housing associations interested in reducing air pollution. The first round of funding saw a number of successful bids, for example from THCH to install electric charging points for cleaning vans, and from St Luke's Primary School to install a green screen around the nursery to help protect infants from toxic car fumes.

**Railway arches:** I have called for an urgent meeting with the developers who have purchased the management rights to 600 railway arches in Tower Hamlets from Network Rail. Many businesses had faced rent increases of up to 350% from Network Rail, and I am seeking clarity from the new owners that businesses will not be forced out by rent rises now they are owned by Telereal Trillium and Blackstone property partners. I also support a full and transparent lease audit as the Guardians of the Arches group have called for.

**Building Council Homes for Londoners:** Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has allocated £13m for Tower Hamlets to support the delivery of 675 new council homes at affordable rents over the next four years – this is very welcome news. There are a number of questions on this on the agenda, and I would like to assure members that our social housing targets remain amongst the highest and we made the right bid. We – and many of our Councillors and cabinet members are involved in this - will stretch every muscle to try to meet housing need here but it is quite right that other boroughs, with their funding, will be rising to better meet the need too. Inner London boroughs are beginning to run out of sites for easy further construction of social homes without major estate regeneration, and we are determined to keep our community on board as we develop any future plans.

**VAWG Charter:** We – myself and Cllr Asma Begum - have launched the new Violence Against Women and Girls Charter. This offers practical support, like the Sanctuary Scheme, to improve the security of a victim's home and it promises ongoing work with children who live with domestic abuse. The charter provides an additional commitment to lobby the Government to make misogyny a hate crime.

**Local Community Fund:** We have announced a new approach to funding community organisations and the voluntary sector in Tower Hamlets. The £2.6 million Local Community Fund will replace the existing mainstream grants programme, which is due to come to an end next year.

**Temporary Accommodation:** A Bethnal Green cottage has been transformed from a vacant building into homeless accommodation, as part of the £2.25 million we set aside last year to fund the transformation of council-owned properties into self-contained temporary accommodation. This is an ambitious programme and we have since I became Mayor bought over 200 properties as temporary accommodation, as well as converting a small number of our buildings.

**Crime & ASB:** We are continuing to focus on Crime & ASB, including but not just violent crime, as this remains an absolute concern for residents. We are looking at how we can better sharpen our resources on this. We have recently decided to separate our ASB enforcement officers (THEOs) from the wider team of environmental and enforcement THEOs, in order to better target this priority. We are looking also at how we can better deploy our youth services to both provide a good centre-based service but also enhanced outreach and detached youth services.

**Joint Borough Police Command:** The new joint Borough police command with Hackney is now live and as yet seems to be working smoothly. But it is early days. We remain apprehensive about this but had little choice.

**Max Levitas:** I recently heard with sadness of the death of Max Levitas, at the age of 103. Max was a former Councillor in the Borough but is noted for his role in the Battle of Cable Street and after this as a community activist. I am proud to have called Max a friend. His passing symbolises the departure of living memory of the events of the 1930s but the importance of keeping our awareness of those events and the threat of racism, anti-semitism, and other forms of pernicious divisive politics in our community. 'They Shall not Pass' may not have quite the same starkness as in the 1930s but remains a commitment to which we should remain firm in our resolve.

#### **Individual Mayoral Decisions taken since last meeting:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 – Nominations to Outside Bodies 18/19 – Tranche 2
- 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – Nominations to Outside Bodies 18/19 – Tranche 3

#### **Engagements and Meetings: 20 September to 21 November 2018**

##### **20 September 2018**

- Adults, Health & Wellbeing - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Denise Jones & Denise Radley
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - (Property)
- Launch of Stoptober
- Lawndale Junior School - Head teacher (Annette Rook)
- Mayor's Surgery
- Toynbee Hall Reopening

### **21 September 2018**

- Violent Crime Summit
- Young Work Path Launch of the site and the unveiling of the new look careers service

### **24 September 2018**

- Meeting with Head of Mayor Office
- Children Services Improvement Board
- Meeting with Cllr Mufeeda Bustin
- Meeting with Corporate Director Asmat Hussain
- Meeting with Stephen Johnson
- Meeting Chief Executive of TH
- Excel Tutors Meeting
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### **25 September 2018**

- Phone call with Deputy Mayor of London Sophie Linden
- Meeting with Sanatan Association
- GLPC and Unite Construction Charter
- Meeting with Helen Costa, Chief Executive, The Cornerstone Partnership
- Lansbury Lawrence opening of Edible Garden
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting (Community Safety & Equalities) - Cllr Asma Begum & Denise Radley
- Meeting with Cllr Asma Begum
- Meeting with David Barnett at London Newcastle

### **26 September – 2018**

- Children, Schools & Young People - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Danny Hassell & Debbie Jones
- Public Realm Working Group
- Waste Summit
- Environment - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr David Edgar & Tom McCourt
- Resident casework call
- Mayor's Advisory Board Meeting
- Cabinet Meeting

### **27 September – 2018**

- Meeting with Cllr J. Pierce
- Poplar Harca Quarterly meeting
- Meeting with Cllr R Blake
- Strategic Forward Planning meeting Mayor's Portfolio Meeting – Housing – Cllr Sirajul Islam & Ann Sutcliffe
- Regeneration & Air Quality - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Rachel Blake & Ann Sutcliffe
- Education Cuts Rally – Stepney Green School

- Grants Determination Sub Committee Meeting
- THCH Stakeholders event

### **28 September – 2018**

- London Borough Apprenticeship Awards 2018

### **30 September – 2018**

- Brick lane Festival

### **1<sup>st</sup> October – 2018**

- Meeting with Head of Mayor's Office
- Meeting with Chief Executive
- Meeting with Unison reps
- Waste Strategy Consultation Meeting

### **02 October 2018**

- KEMP Masterplan Advisory Group
- Meeting with Karen Boc MBE - Head of Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service (THAMES)
- Meeting re Raines/Chandler Street
- Air Quality Partnership Board

### **03 October 2018**

- Work & Economic Growth - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Motin Uz-Zaman & Ann Sutcliffe
- Town Hall Project Board
- Meeting with Cllr Candida Ronald Budget development meetings
- Confirmed Sam Gurney TUC Meeting
- The Glasshouse, Parkview Estate, 161, Old Ford Rd, E2 9QB

### **04 October – 2018**

- Walkabout in Josslyn Court with Cllr A Begum & Cllr V Whitehead
- BBC Interview - Big Clean Up Event
- Grants policy discussion
- Early Help launch
- Mayor's Surgery
- City of London Policy and Resources Dinner

### **05 October - 2018**

- "Bangladesh Protidin" Launch event (New Newspaper)

### **06 October – 2018**

- Boundary Fun Palace
- Labour Group away day

### **08 October – 2018**

- Cycling Photoshoot
- Mayor Biggs/Susmita Sen - Catch up

- Mayor & Head of Mayor's Office
- Telephone Call – London Councils
- Meeting Andreas Christophorou, Divisional Director Communications and Marketing
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - (Property)
- Meeting with Film Office
- Meeting with Professor Colin Bailey
- Meeting with Cllr Puru Miah

#### **09 October – 2018**

- London Councils Pre - Leaders Committee Meeting
- London Councils Leaders Committee Meeting
- Meeting with Cllr Amina Ali
- Meeting with Cllr S Islam
- Meeting with local business
- Meeting with Head of HR
- Ask The Mayor public meeting

#### **10 October – 2018**

- Grants policy meeting
- Meeting regarding London City Airport
- Planning Meeting
- Budget development meeting
- Mayor's Advisory Board
- Mayor's Regeneration Board
- Meeting with Cllr Motin Uz-Zaman

#### **11 October – 2018**

- Meeting with Bromley-By-Bow centre
- ASB & Enforcement meeting
- Meeting with Tower Hamlets Council Chief Executive Will Tuckley
- Meeting with Cllr Asma & Cllr Val with Mayor
- Restorative Practice Training
- Mayor's Surgery

#### **12 October – 2018**

- Assets meeting
- Telephone call with Chief Executive Will Tuckley

#### **14 October – 2018**

- Royal British Legion event
- Weekly Potrika Anniversary Event

#### **15 October 2018**

- Mayor of London Visit to Cubitt Town Junior School
- Hate Crime Champions Welcome Event & Presentation of Certificates
- Meeting with Deputy Head of Mayor's Office
- Local Unite Trade Union Meeting

- Meeting with Divisional Director for Strategy, Policy & Performance
- Quad Meeting
- Labour group Executive Committee
- Labour Group

### **16 October – 2018**

- Beatrice Tate School
- Meeting with Cllr R. Blake
- London Poverty Challenge Week - Food Bank Visit
- Local Democracy Week - School Visit
- Meeting with Unite trade union
- Meeting with Tower Hamlets Council Chief Executive Will Tuckley
- York Square residents meeting
- Overview and Scrutiny

### **17 October – 2018**

- Meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner and Deputy
- Adults, Health & Wellbeing - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Denise Jones & Denise Radley
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting (Culture, Arts & Brexit) - Cllr Amina Ali & Debbie Jones
- Mayor's Advisory Board
- Peace Walk for hate crime awareness week
- Waste contract meeting Mile end temple
- Sanaton Association Durga Puja

### **18 October 2018**

- Meeting with Cllr Angela Harvey (Westminster)
- Greater London Provincial Council (AGM)
- Housing visit
- Mayor's Surgery
- St Luke's Church, Isle of Dogs

### **19 October 2018**

- Meeting with Cllr Peter John (Southwark) Bishop Adrian's farewell party

### **22 October 2018**

- Head of Mayor's Office
- Meeting – Divisional Director Richard Baldwin
- Resident meeting
- Meeting with Tower Hamlets Council Chief Executive Will Tuckley Chief Executive and Borough Commander - catch up (rescheduled from 15/10)
- London Moving East event – City Hall

### **23 October 2018**

- Budget Consultation meeting
- Mayors Traffic Meeting

- Meeting with Cllr Asma Begum
- Mayor's drop-in, Weavers & St Peter's wards
- Homelessness Strategy-Feedback Session

#### **24 October 2018**

- Children, Schools & Young People - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Danny Hassell & Debbie Jones
- Red Box project meeting
- Meeting with foster parent
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting – Housing
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting (Community Safety & Equalities) - Cllr Asma Begum & Denise Radley
- Mayor's Advisory Board
- NDCS Meeting Environment - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr David Edgar & Tom McCourt
- Waterloo Gardens Redevelopment meeting
- Hind Grove Masjid & cultural centre

#### **25 October 2018**

- Meeting with Jim Fitzpatrick MP
- Meeting with Lansbury Estate Muslim Association
- Meeting with Cllr V. Whitehead
- Meeting with Cllr Dipa Das
- Pre meet - Jules Pipe meeting on 1st Nov
- SLI stories meeting with Phil Swann
- Ghastly Games & Storytelling event
- Meeting with Cllr Candida Ronald
- Meeting with Head of Mayor's Office
- Mayor's Surgery

#### **27 October 2018**

- British Legion Poppy Launch
- Queen Victoria Seaman's Rest visit

#### **29 October 2018**

- Meeting With Corporate Director Asmat Hussain
- Meeting re: Billingsgate
- Meeting with Head of Mayor's Office
- Meeting with Blue Pearl
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting
- Meeting with Cllr Puru Miah
- Delivering Homes for Londoners event

#### **30 October 2018**

- NARE AGM

#### **31 October 2018**



- Regeneration & Air Quality - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Rachel Blake & Ann Sutcliffe
- Meeting with In link re. ASB
- Call with Bangladesh High Commissioner
- Meeting re.THPB pre meet
- Mayor's Political Cabinet
- Public Realm Working Group
- Cabinet

#### **01 November 2018**

- Corporate Staff Induction
- Meeting Tower Hamlets Council Chief Executive Will Tuckley
- Strategic Forward Planning meeting
- Meeting with Deputy Mayor of London Jules Pipe
- Meeting with Head teacher William Davis Primary School
- Mayor's Surgery
- Care in the community Event

#### **02 November 2018**

- Diwali Event at Speakers Chamber
- Opposing the Rise of the Far Right - Unmesh Desai Event
- Season of Bangla Drama

#### **04 November -2018**

- Victoria Park Firework display

#### **05 November – 2018**

- Breakfast roundtable event
- Meeting with Head of Mayor's Office
- Healthier School Dinners visit
- Beyond the Food Bank awards ceremony at City Hall
- Meeting with Divisional Director for Strategy, Policy& Performance

#### **06 November – 2018**

- Visit to London East Alternative Provision
- Mayor's Traffic Meeting
- Meeting with local business
- Meeting Divisional Director for Communications
- Meeting with Sir Alan Wood
- ALMO Review Interview
- Ask the Mayor Public Meeting

#### **07 November - 2018**

- Work & Economic Growth - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Motin Uz-Zaman & Ann Sutcliffe
- Town Hall Project Board
- Meeting with Cllr Danny Hassell
- Mayor's Regeneration Board

- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Candida Ronald & Zena Cooke - Resources
- Mayor's Advisory Board
- Grants Determination Sub Committee

#### **08 November – 2018**

- Meeting with Sir George Iacobescu (Canary Wharf Group)
- Meeting with Tower Hamlets Council Chief Executive Will Tuckley
- Meeting with Unite trade union representatives re. Waste contract
- Meeting with Cllr Candida Ronald
- Mayor's Surgery

#### **09 November – 2018**

- Tower Hamlets Council Annual Service of Remembrance
- London Muslim Centre public meeting

#### **11 November – 2018**

- Remembrance Day Service – Tower Hill

#### **12 November 2018**

- Meeting with Head of Mayor's Office
- Partnership summit briefing
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - (Property)
- CLF Employment and Skills Board Meeting
- You Make it Graduation Ceremony

#### **13 November 2018**

- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting (Culture, Arts & Brexit) - Cllr Amina Ali & Debbie Jones
- Meeting with Rishi Sunak MP, Minister for Local Government
- Quintet meeting
- Fwd: Local Plan EIP - Thank you Tea and cakes
- York Sq community - follow up residents meeting
- Streets of Growth 17th Anniversary and Young People Award Celebration

#### **14 November 2018**

- Future of the LLDC
- Planning Meeting
- Meeting with Chief Executive Will Tuckley
- Mayor's Political Cabinet
- Mayors Advisory Board
- HIV Week - Mayor Test/Photo/Video
- Photo with the Mayor regarding Kinder transport

#### **15 November 2018**

- Capital Strategy Board Meeting
- Meeting with Professor Boderick, University of East London

- Meeting with Richard Chilcott & Deputy Mayor Cllr Sirajul Islam
- Meeting with Deputy Mayor Cllr Sirajul Islam
- Invitation to Kinder transport Commemoration
- Mayor's Surgery
- Casework Team - Catch up

#### **16 November 2018**

- London Councils Labour Group meeting

#### **17 November 2018**

- London Council Summit

#### **19 November 2018**

- Meeting with Head of Mayor's Office
- Town Hall Project Board
- Sadiq Khan Visit to Poplar
- Meeting with LLDC
- Meeting With Corporate Director Asmat Hussain
- Tower Hamlets Partnership Summit
- Labour Group Executive Committee
- Labour Group Meeting

#### **20 November 2018**

- Central London Forward Board meeting
- Opening ceremony of Ranees Store, Whitechapel
- Practice Week visit
- Meeting with London Bangla Press Club president Sayed Nahas Pasha
- Meeting re. Mayor's Early Years Summit
- Meeting with Deputy Mayor Cllr Sirajul Islam

#### **21 November 2018**

- Meeting with Cllr John Pierce
- Watts Grove Community Project Handover Ceremony
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting – Housing
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Environment
- Pre-Council Labour Group Meeting
- Council Meeting