

Responses to Questions not put at the Council meeting on 17th November 2021

11.1 Question from Councillor Eve McQuillan

Will the Mayor provide an update on the Liveable Streets programme given his recent announcement?

Response from Mayor John Biggs

Thank you for your question about Liveable Streets.

Last month we announced the next steps on Liveable Streets following a short review of the seven schemes currently underway. We paused the scheme over the summer to consider a number of issues and concerns that had been raised by some residents and businesses.

Following this review there will be some changes to make road access easier where a problem of access was identified, and these will be subject where necessary to consultation. Once completed, as the schemes bed in, we will monitor and review their operation.

We've always been committed to the benefits of safer, calmer and cleaner streets, but it's important to consider the issues that some residents and businesses have raised. We've taken those concerns on board and are adapting the schemes in a few places as required.

Our review was about finding the right balance for our community to deliver the cleaner air and safer streets that our residents deserve, while making a small number of changes to address problems that had been identified.

11.6 Supplementary Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Can the Lead Member provide an update on the delivery of the Development Infrastructure Funding Study?

Response of Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

The Development Infrastructure Funding Study (DIFS) that supported the GLA's Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework (IODSP OAPF) was influenced by and has influenced the council's internal Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which supports the Local Plan. The two documents are intended to be broadly in accord with each other, whilst allowing for the fact that they cover different geographical ranges and timescales (DIFS is up to 2041, whereas the IDP is up to 2031).

The IDP is used to support the council's approach and governance of infrastructure projects approval and delivery, and therefore the DIFS is reflected in these processes for all projects up to 2031. The DIFS study is available to view on the GLA's website alongside the OAPF.

TfL is reviewing their investment programme which is very much impacted by the pandemic. LBTH and GLA are monitoring delivery of OAPF with the first full review point in 2024. Changes in the TfL plans may trigger this review and potential update to DIFS earlier.

11.14 Question from Councillor David Edgar

The interim report of the Competition and Markets Authority reports that private providers of children's homes are making 'significant and persistent' profits by charging councils elevated prices for placements with the largest providers charging councils an average of £3,830 a week per child with an average operating profit margin of 23%.

What is the response of the council to this report and is it considering with other councils the option of providing children's home directly?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities

Tower Hamlets welcomes the findings of this report as it echoes the experience we have had to find appropriate and value for money residential placements for some of our most complex and highest need children.

Tower Hamlets is one of nine other boroughs working in partnership on developing a residential framework to provide children's homes across North East London with the aim of improved and value for money residential accommodation that provide children with a better care experience.

The framework has been in operation since 2020 and care experienced children were consulted in the development of the project to ensure that the right environment is created for children moving into the homes. The goal is offer up to 35 placements across the 9 authorities by the end of 2022, and there are currently three children's homes up and running with nine placements from the consortium.

This initiative is a first step in a wider pan-London strategy by all London local authorities to regain more control of the market.

11.15 Question from Councillor Bex White

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the Local Infrastructure Fund consultation with residents for the coming year?

Response of Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning:

On Monday 8th November 2021, the 6 week public consultation for LIF (Local Infrastructure Fund) Programme 4 began. The income collected is estimated to be around £2.5million.

Much like last year's consultation, local people are invited to suggest project ideas for local infrastructure improvements within their neighbourhoods. This is a 'call for

projects' approach again, with more detailed engagement on projects and priorities to be undertaken by the end of summer next year.

The consultation will include an online questionnaire, online map survey tool, virtual drop-in events, and targeted engagement via community groups. This process accords with our regulatory duty to engage and agree with local people on how we should spend LIF funding.

Further information was provided at the two councillor sessions earlier this month, including discussion on long-term member involvement in the LIF programme and the outline of the LIF consultation.

Additionally, more information can be found on the council's website dedicated to the consultation at <https://talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lif>.

11.16 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Following my visit with the Director for Environment to Watney Market in Shadwell raising concerns of disrepair to the Market, traders and businesses to have better improved premises, storage and stalls to operate from improve, cleaner and sanitised areas both in the underground parking and in the market square and improved lighting, will the Mayor commit to ensuring that Watney Market is improved by addressing the issues identified from the visit.

Response from Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Work, Economic Growth and Faith

The many problems identified at Watney Market are all interrelated, and I'm sure you would agree that it is important to adopt a holistic approach to repairs and future maintenance to prevent issues recurring.

Officers from the Council and Tower Hamlets Homes are currently preparing a substantial capital bid for 22/23 to address the issues identified, and are in the process of agreeing a service level agreement whereby Tower Hamlets Council can assume responsibility of maintenance for the whole area, with other landowners (THH and One Housing Group), contributing to costs as appropriate and proportionate.

I hope you find this response useful, and I am happy to discuss it with you further.