

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 19 th January 2022	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motions submitted by Members of the Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. 3 motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 19th January 2022.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the motions alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups, with the Opposition Group motions starting with the largest Political Group not to have that meeting's Opposition Motion Debate slot.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS

Set out overleaf is the motions that have been submitted.

12.1 Motion regarding Memorial to the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

Proposed by: Cllr Sabina Akhtar

Seconded by: Cllr Rachel Blake

This Council believes:

1. We have a proud modern history in Tower Hamlets of championing diversity and standing up to discrimination, but there is more we can do
2. That historically under-represented groups should be remembered in the public realm
3. That the women and girls who took part in the Match Factory Strike of 1888 were pioneers of the Labour Movement (see notes)

This Council notes:

1. The Council has pro-actively undertaken a review of race and equality in the public realm.
2. The purpose of the review was to share thoughts about under-representation in public spaces – not only in terms of race, but also on issues across the equalities landscape including but not limited to civil rights, workers', women's and LGBTQ+ rights and more.
3. The review asked the community identify and nominate other names, particularly of under-represented groups, who have done something memorable and who we should celebrate.

This Council resolves:

1. To welcome ideas for remembering the Matchwomen and Matchgirls who fought for their employment rights
2. To work with the Matchgirls Memorial Trust to remember the struggle of the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

12.2 Motion regarding Infrastructure to support development

Proposed by: Councillor Andrew Wood

Seconded by: Councillor Peter Golds

This Council notes:

- The Mayor of London set Tower Hamlets Council a target in March 2020 to deliver 34,730 homes in ten years between 2019/20 and 2028/29
- In addition he has set a target for Isle of Dogs Opportunity Area to deliver 29,000 new homes and space for 110,000 jobs
- In addition there are additional housing and jobs targets for the following Opportunity Areas which partially includes areas within Tower Hamlets - City Fringe/Tech City, Poplar Riverside and Olympic Legacy
- The Councils own Local Plan adopted in January 2020 requires us to deliver 54,889 homes in fifteen years between 2016 and 2031 – mainly in the Aldgate, Whitechapel, Poplar and Isle of Dogs areas.

The Council further notes that:

- The failure to build the approved bridge (PA/11/00637) across the Lea river by the Leven Road gas works site despite knowing that major developments were planned in the area and allowing the new gas works application to invalidate that planning permission by permitting building on land reserved for the new bridge
- The continuing delays to the 4th attempt to build a new pedestrian only bridge across South Quay whose budget has now increased to over £20 million. The failure to provide cyclists with cycling access on that new bridge.
- That Thames Water still need to dig up Burdett Road between Mile End and Westferry station to ensure enough fresh water supply to support development in the E14 area
- That UKPN do not have the capacity to support all new developments on the Isle of Dogs and somebody may need to spend £20 million to improve electricity capacity to Marsh Wall
- That the GLA funded Development Infrastructure Funding Study (DIFS) completed in November 2017 and discussed with Council officers in June of summer 2017 detailed the need to spend over a billion pounds on infrastructure to support the growth required in the above targets between April 2017 and March 2041.
- It was written by Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA) with Cushman & Wakefield (C&W) and Gardiner & Theobald (G&T) for the Greater London Authority (GLA), London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) and Transport for London (TfL).
- The DIFS estimated that a number of organisations including LBTH had to spend £503.7 million on new infrastructure to support growth on the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar between April 2017 and March 2022 (£156.8 million by TfL on new DLR trains)
- The closure of St Georges Leisure Centre due to known issues not resolved sooner
- The delayed re-opening of Tiller road leisure centre and York Hall due to problems found in 2020

That the Council has £587 millions of reserves including substantial sums of s106 and CIL monies from developers and New Homes Bonus from government – all due to previous developments completing.

This Council therefore recommends:

- To ask Council officers to work with stakeholders to provide an update on progress of the DIFS recommendations and actual spend as at March 2022
- To provide an update on the infrastructure improvements to be delivered by March 2022 to support growth in the City Fringe/Tech City, Poplar Riverside and Olympic Legacy areas
- To confirm the status of Thames Water network improvements to the Isle of Dogs and other growth areas in Tower Hamlets
- To confirm the status of electricity supply issues to the Isle of Dogs and other growth areas in Tower Hamlets and what the Council and the GLA are doing to help alleviate the bottlenecks
- To provide a briefing to the Strategic Development Committee and the Community Development Panel for the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar on the delivery of infrastructure.

12.3 Motion regarding Re-Open St Georges Swimming Baths

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

This Council Notes:

1. Swimming emerged as a competitive sport in the 1830's in England. In 1828, the first indoor swimming pool, St George's Baths was opened to the public.
2. Located on The Highway in the heart of Shadwell, St Georges Leisure Centre has been part of the borough's history for many years and is home to a gym with a variety of equipment, junior gym sessions and women only sessions.
3. That it is always in the best interests of everyone in the borough to remain as fit as possibly, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic, and that St Georges Swimming Pool on The Highway should remain open for all.
4. St George's Pool has two pools, one 33 metres in length with wonderful maximum light. St George's Baths has now been closed since March 2020, 19 months, because of Covid-19 and it's opening is well overdue.
5. This administration's own report on swimming provision in the borough referenced a teacher who said that unless swimming pools are in proximity, schools cannot justify three - hours on sport within the curriculum as priority needs to be given to other areas of the core curriculum.
6. A letter was sent to the Mayor and all Councillors from the Turks Head The Turk's Head Charity & Save St George's Pool Steering Committee on the 3rd January 2022.
7. The letter outlined the following key concerns that the motion must consider.
 - 3,000 people sign a petition to re-open St George's Pool.
 - Through Freedom of Information requests, it emerged that the department responsible for the pool, Culture and Sport has sat on condition surveys for St George's since 2018 which were only released in November when a consultation period commenced.
 - Information on the pool has literally had to be prised from officers which stated categorically that with proper investment the pool could be refurbished to an acceptable standard if done immediately. Nothing was done and in March 2020 everything in the pool was switched off which has led to more issues.
 - In August the Council instructed architects Faulkner Browns to complete a feasibility study on St George's and look at numerous options for a pool at John Orwell Sports Centre in Wapping.
 - The options for a pool in Wapping include reconfiguring the entire site and using the derelict piece of land adjacent to the centre on Vaughan Way. This land is contaminated and if used will need a lot of money to be permitted for development.
 - There are at least 12 options for this site none of which are like for like pools to replace St George's, just a standard 25 metre pool and teaching pool. The feasibility study for St George's did not include a complete refurbishment, but rather demolition with a housing development and pool at ground level.
 - We have tried everything possible to engage with the Mayor and council officers for them to reopen the pool and have now requested that an independent feasibility study by a team led by architect Piers Gough, structural engineers Price and Myers, building economists BWA and

energy experts ISO. They require full access to the site.

- We firmly believe that the pool could be refurbished to a very high standard with energy efficient water treatment and filtration systems and attract many more users by providing a spa and hydro pool that could be used in conjunction with the NHS. An extension could be added to the derelict laundry for a fully equipped gym. Given that that the Council's business model for leisure centres is for both wet and dry facilities, this could be achieved.
- There are many issues with relocating the pool to Wapping, mainly that it would leave Shadwell without a single large public facility. Shadwell residents are least likely to travel to Wapping, which is not easily accessible and building a new leisure centre there would add to the presumed wealth of that area at the expense of a much poorer area.
- We question the validity of the consultation, which has taken place over the Christmas period, was hastily put together and is only available to those who are online, computer confident and have a good grasp of English.
- We believe that Council officers need to be challenged on how the pool was allowed to be neglected for so long and with such a devastating impact. We believe that officers do not have a mandate to pursue the direction it is following and have little confidence in the outcome of the consultation which closes on 3 January.
- St George's Pool is an iconic building on the Highway and was built by an award-winning architect. Its location provides a barrier from the pollution on the Highway to homes that lay behind it and is an important contribution to the sense of well-being that is provided by St George's in the East and the recently refurbished St George's Town Hall, now the borough's registry office.
- We ask that you act collectively to actively intervene in this issue and prevent the Council from wasting upwards of £45 million to provide a pool that will not provide an adequate service. For less disruption, environmental damage and negative publicity you could have an improved and renovated St George's and John Orwell and the Wapping Lido at Brussels Wharf for which we have planning permission, for less than half the cost of the redevelopment options. Our analysis is based on the cost of the Britannia by the same architects.

The Council Further Notes:

1. It is wholly unacceptable of everyone who has learnt to swim at St George's and will do so in future that this administration should use the pandemic as an excuse for the baths to remain closed.
2. The very same report also suggested that the possibility of an outside swimming pool or lido is being explored. What sense does this make when we have a swimming pool that the administration is considering closing?
3. In the words of one resident "St George's Baths is one of the bedrocks of my life and I want it to be there for all for all the people who come after me."
4. There are few enough public exercise facilities in this borough and few swimming pools. It seems that the published costs for reopening St George's is not £10 million as the administration claims but £1m.
5. Another excuse for this amazing community asset to remain closed is that leisure centre usage, including St Georges Swimming Baths, is approximately 60% of what it was prior to the pandemic outbreak. This is no surprise. It is also no surprise that this figure will remain low while St Georges Swimming Baths

remains closed.

This Council resolves:

1. To fully commit to reopening St Georges Swimming Baths as soon as possible, recognising that its use is a fundamental factor in the total recover from Covid-19 that we all face.
2. There is no need for a consultation as to whether St Georges Swimming Baths should be reopened, it must be open once again and that is that.
3. The administration should undertake a full and open process to investigate what is needed to restore St Georges Swimming Baths to peak condition and in addition consider ways in which additional revenue can be generated to ensure its future.
4. Once this is completed then St George's Baths should be open once again for current and future generations to enjoy.