

Mayor's Report to Council

16th March 2022

John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets

Key Events/Announcements

Budget: The Budget was passed on 2nd March at Full Council, and I am proud of the work we have done on this important piece of work.

The increase in energy bills, the rise in food prices and the upcoming hike of National Insurance contributions has already hit residents hard through the Cost of Living Crisis, and this is only set to get worse due to the uncertain economic picture caused by the terrible events in Ukraine. Our proposals to include no new cuts to council services this year and freezing the council's portion of Council Tax demonstrate to residents that Tower Hamlets Council is doing all it can to support them and protect the services they rely on in these extraordinary times.

The Budget invests in a cleaner, safer and fairer borough and works to build on the strong record of the Council during the course of this administration – something we will be talking about more in an administration motion this evening.

The Budget proposals have been published and you can see them via the link below:

<https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=720&MId=12321&Ver=4>

Ukraine: I know you are shocked as I am to see the awful events in Ukraine, and the horrors of war. The Ukrainian people continue to show incredible courage, dignity and resilience in the face of Putin's invasion. We have seen many reports of individual and collective acts of bravery in defence of the nation's freedom and democracy, as well as heart-breaking reports about those who have been murdered because of Putin's actions.

The East End is an area defined by migration and diversity, and we live in a very connected world. Our values and interests do not end at the end of our street or the edge of our local community. I was proud to co-sign an open letter to the Ukrainian Ambassador to the UK, along with leaders of the opposition here in Tower Hamlets, outlining support for and solidarity with Ukraine.

I will be providing an update on the Council's approach as and when this fast moving situation develops, but in the meantime please see a list of organisations below you can donate to aid the people of Ukraine:

- The Red Cross has set up the [Ukraine Crisis Appeal, which is requesting donations to respond to humanitarian needs](#) through food, water, first aid, medicines, warm clothes and shelter.
- Unicef has set up a [specific fund to protect children in Ukraine](#)
- The UN refugee agency [helps refugees fleeing situations of war and has a specific collection for Ukraine](#)

- Care International is [running an emergency appeal to provide emergency food and water](#)
- The Ukrainian Embassy has set up [a special fund to support Ukraine](#)

Whitechapel Signs: I am delighted to announce that Bengali language signage has been installed at Whitechapel Station to acknowledge the importance and contribution of the Bangladeshi community to east London. Tower Hamlets Council has funded dual language signs in English and Bengali outside and throughout the station, costing £30,000.

Whitechapel is one of London's most famous places and we are now creating a new history with developments including the Elizabeth Line and renovating the former Royal London Hospital building.

Following our successful year of celebrations to mark 50 years since of Bangladeshi independence, it is fantastic that the signs have been installed in time for Bangladesh Independence Day on Saturday 26 March.

Mayor's Academies Programme: I am delighted that the Council has successfully secured £250,000 of funding on behalf of the four borough LIFT initiative to deliver a Digital Hub as part of the Mayor's Academies Programme, which aims to support Londoners hardest hit by the pandemic.

Once established, the LIFT Digital Hub will work with employers to understand emerging skill needs and recruitment challenges in the digital sector. The hub will then coordinate an offer of effective training across local providers to equip local people with the skills they need to access good jobs in the sector.

There will also be an improvement on the access to employment and training opportunities for people from groups underrepresented in the sector, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background, women and young people aged 16-25.

The Mayor's High Street Clean-Up: Tower Hamlets' busiest high streets are getting a deep clean this February and March as part of my Covid Recovery Fund.

The £3 million fund aimed at kickstarting the economic, health and social recovery from Covid-19 in the borough, has set aside over £250,000 for a focussed approach to addressing the pandemic build-up of litter, fly-tipping, graffiti and grime in our high streets and town centres.

This is a great initiative and I would welcome any volunteers. More information can be found via the below link:

https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/News_events/2022/February-2022/The-Mayor's-High-Street-Clean-Up-is-coming.aspx

Waste and Recycling Update: Tackling our waste problem is crucial to responding to the climate emergency and the problem of plastic pollution. A new project to support residents across Tower Hamlets living in tower blocks to recycle more of their waste is being rolled out after a six-month pilot. The council has secured £2.1m in funding to help ensure that residents can benefit from improved recycling facilities.

Over the next three years, the council will be providing new and improved infrastructure to estates across the borough, such as upgrading and providing additional communal recycling bins, clear and visible signage around bins, and providing information about proper ways to recycle.

Children's Services: At our last Cabinet meeting, we agreed a new investment in children's services to ensure those most vulnerable in our society are protected and to unlock the opportunity in our young minds in the borough.

The following proposals were agreed:

- £650k to improve special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services
- £500k to strengthen Early Years services for children born during the pandemic
- £450k to provide activities through the Bounce Back programme
- £690k in Speech and Language Therapy for children under the age of five
- £460k to boost youth services

Individual Mayoral Decisions taken since last meeting

None.

Engagements and Meetings

19th January 2022 – 16th March 2022

19 January 2022

- Mayor's Housing Portfolio Meeting
- Mayor's Assets/Property Portfolio Meeting
- Regeneration Portfolio Meeting
- Mayor's Community Safety Portfolio Meeting
- Mayor's Political Cabinet
- Chief Executive Will Tuckley
- Pre-Council Labour Group
- Council

20 January 2022

- Mayor's Surgery
- Planning Meeting
- Discussion on Growth Bids
- Discussion on Capital
- Co-op Meeting

21 January 2022

- Catch up – Cllr R Blake
- London Councils Labour Group
- Patel Taylor Architects
- Cllr Abdal Ullah
- London Tea Exchange Reception Cricket World Cup

22 January 2022

- Policy Workshop
- Tower Hamlets Wheelers / Better Streets for Tower Hamlets winter party

23 January 2022

- Home visit with Cllr Asma Islam

24 January 2022

- Mayor's Surgery
- Partnership Executive Group Briefing
- Press Conference
- Audit Catch Up
- NTH Financial Business Case
- TFL and LBTH Whitechapel Signage and Other Initiatives
- LCF Meeting
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee

25 January 2022

- Briefing the Mayor on SP Development
- TH Partnership Executive Group Meeting
- Adults, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Meeting
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting (Culture, Arts & Sport) - Cllr Sabina Akhtar & James Thomas

26 January 2022

- Green Jobs, Green Skills and Green Finance - CLF Breakfast Board Meeting
- Social Inclusion Portfolio Meeting
- Policy Development Meetings
- Regeneration Board
- Policy Development Meetings – Candida
- Mayor's Advisory Board

27 January 2022

- Mojo Development Residents Meeting with Mayor & Cllr Rachel Blake
- LGA Labour Group Meeting
- Town Hall Project Board

- Policy Development Meetings – Cllr Sirajul Islam
- Partnership Task Force visit
- Leaside Partnership Board
- Hybrid - Extraordinary Audit Committee Mtg-27/01
- Poplar and Limehouse Labour Party GC Meeting

28 January 2022

- Tour of the Heritage & Arts Centre Bow
- Place Update
- Policy Development Meetings – Sabina

29 January 2022

- St Katharine's Event

1 February 2022

- Redcoat Community Centre and Mosque Meeting

2 February 2022

- Policy development meetings — Cllr Asma Begum
- Policy development meetings – Cllr Mufeedah Bustin
- Mayor's Traffic Meeting
- Mayor's Political Cabinet
- Mayor's Advisory Board
- Regeneration Board Update
- Young Mayor and Youth Council

3 February 2022

- CLF - Employment & Skills Board Meeting
- Tower Hamlets Co-operative Commission (green growth, fuel poverty and community energy)

4 February 2022

- Catch Up - Rachel Blake
- St George's Swimming Pool follow up from Shadwell Responds

5 February 2022

- 10th anniversary of Mile End parkrun

7 February 2022

- Overview & Scrutiny Committee

8 February 2022

- Cabinet Pre-meet
- London Councils Labour Group (Pre Leaders Ctte)
- London Councils Leaders' Committee
- Cllr Sirajul Islam

9 February 2022

- Mayor Sadiq Khan visit – mentoring for young Londoners launch
- Installation of a Knife Bin
- Business support grants comms press conference
- Photo - CCTV control room
- Mayors Advisory Board
- Cabinet
- Home Visits

10 February 2022

- Resident meeting
- Introduction Meeting: Mayor Biggs and Musrat Zaman
- Introduction meeting - The Mayor and the Director of Supporting Families
- 1:1 Mayor/Janet Fasan
- Clare House Update

11 February 2022

- Waste Meeting

14 February 2022

- Mayor's Surgery
- BT Group Follow Up Meeting
- Co-op commission Catch-up
- City Corporation's Billingsgate Market
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 February 2022

- Mansards Meeting
- Cllr Asma Islam
- COVID-19 Local Engagement Board
- Mile End home visits

16 February 2022

- Resources & Voluntary Sector Portfolio Meeting - Performance & Budget
- City Fringe Area Board Meeting
- Pre Meet- Gold Star Dry Cleaners Planning Dispute
- Mayors Advisory Board
- Work & Economic Growth - Mayor's Portfolio Meeting (Performance & Budget) - Cllr Motin Uz-Zaman & Ann Sutcliffe
- Policy Development Session - for economic development

17 February 2022

- Two More Years Bar
- 1:1 - Will Mayor

18 February 2022

- Waste Meeting
- Thank You Dinner – Hilton_Barkantine Management Team

20 February 2022

- Martyr's Day Event 2022 (Cancelled due to weather; rearranged to 21st February)

21 February 2022

- Official Open day for Suttons Wharf Health Centre
- Mayor's Surgery
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting - Housing (Performance & Budget)
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee

22 February 2022

- Mayor meeting with design team for King Edward Memorial Park
- Labour Group Pre Meeting
- Greater London Employment Forum Employers Side Meeting
- Greater London Employment Forum - Joint Meeting
- Apasen Visit
- Isle of Dogs Walkabout
- Somali Working Group Discussion

23 February 2022

- Meet Cllr Helal Uddin
- Mayor's Portfolio Meeting (Community Safety Portfolio) Performance & Budget - Cllr Sirajul Islam & Denise Radley

- Mayors Housing Meeting
- Environment & Public Realm Portfolio Meeting - (Performance & Budget)
- Mayor's Political Cabinet
- Ward Audit Meeting
- Clare House update: Clarion HA & LBTH

24 February 2022

- NARE Meeting
- High Street Clean Up (Covid Recovery Fund)
- Victoria Park visit
- Civic awards

25 February 2022

- Redcoat Community Centre and Mosque

27 February 2022

- Guest of Honour as Special Guest Speaker at the BGM of GSC South East Region
- Udichi UK Conference 2022

28 February 2022

- Mayor's Surgery
- Meeting with Rushanara Ali, MP
- Liveable Streets update
- Update on the 2021 pay round
- Executive Committee
- Labour Group

1 March 2022

- Silk District Affordable Housing - Topping Out Ceremony
- Town Hall Comms Milestone
- Press conference – budget
- Prayer together for Ukraine

2 March 2022

- Regeneration Portfolio Meeting
- Planning Meeting
- Assets/Property Portfolio Meeting - Performance & Budget
- Mayor's Political Cabinet
- Pre-meet for ICS Leaders' Meeting

- Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Asma Islam Poplar HARCA Quarterly Meeting
- Pre-Council Budget Labour Group
- Council (Budget Meeting)

3 March 2022

- 1:1 - Mayor/Ann Sutcliffe
- 1:1 - Will Mayor
- Follow-up Meeting: Mojo Development Residents with Mayor & Cllr Rachel Blake
- Consultation re. St Anne's Limehouse
- King George's Field Charity Board Meeting
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Commercial Road Car Pound Briefing
- Resident Meeting Limehouse Causeway

4 March 2022

- London Councils Labour Group
- Susmita Sen, Tower Hamlets Homes - Royal Mint

6 March 2022

- Memorial Service Bethnal Green tube disaster

7 March 2022

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8 March 2022

- Youth Justice Management Board
- Pre-Meet – PEG
- TH Partnership Executive Group meeting
- Children Education & Youth Services Portfolio Meeting - Cllr Asma Begum & James Thomas (Performance & Budget)
- Resident Casework Meeting
- Berner TMO

9 March 2022

- Toynbee Hall peer researchers
- Launch of Tower Hamlets Connection Coalition
- Social Inclusion Portfolio Meeting - Performance & Budget
- Regeneration Board
- Cabinet Pre-Meet
- Grants Determination Sub- Committee Meeting
- Portfolio Meeting (Culture, Arts & Sport) - Cllr Sabina Akhtar & James Thomas (Performance & Budget)

- Cabinet
- Fire Safety meeting

10 March 2022

- Mayor's Surgery
- National Social Prescribing Day at Bromley-By-Bow Centre
- Building Safety Visit with Lord Stephen Greenhalgh and Rushanara Ali MP following fire at Aldgate
- Westferry pre-meet
- Westferry Meeting with Mayor Biggs, Cllr. Asma Islam/Northern & Shell
- Thames Estuary Economic, Housing & Infrastructure Study - Private Briefing: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

11 March 2022

- Cllr Rachel Blake
- Launch of London Fruit & Wool Exchange Employment & Skills Centre

14 March 2022

- Adults, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Meeting - Performance & Budget
- New Town Hall Members Consultative Steering group meeting
- Catch Up - Amy Whitelock- Gibbs
- Resident Hub and Transition Service Update
- Communications Portfolio Meeting - Performance & Budget
- Labour Group
- Syedpur Jubo Kallyan Parishad UK - 7th Anniversary Celebration / new committee inauguration
- Bangladesh Probashi Kallyan Parishad UK (BPKP UK) Board

15 March 2022

- CLF Partnership Board meeting
- Elizabeth Line Community Day
- Cllr Asma Begum
- Follow-up Mansards Residents Meeting - Mayors / Councillors / LBTH Officers
- Housing Visit, Lindley Street
- My Ends project visit - Phoenix Heights and The Reach
- Derai Thana Development dinner