

# Part A – Summary and Explanation

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## 1 Introducing the Council's Constitution

1. This Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to determine.
2. The Constitution is divided into four parts:
  - Part A – Introduction and Explanations
  - Part B – Responsibility for Functions and Decision-Making Procedures
  - Part C – Codes and Protocols
  - Part D – Supplementary Documents
3. The purpose of the Constitution is to ensure that:
  - The Mayor and Council provide clear and accountable leadership to the community in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations;
  - The roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions are clearly defined and documented, with clear delegation arrangements;
  - Citizens, businesses and other organisations are actively involved in decision making;
  - Citizens are effectively represented by their Mayor and Councillors;
  - The delivery of services to the community is improved;
  - Decisions are taken efficiently, effectively and transparently;
  - Decision-makers are clearly identifiable, that they explain the reasons for their decisions and can be held to public account.
  - The highest standards of conduct of Members and officers of the authority is maintained and that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved;
  - It provides a comprehensive document explaining how the Council operates, who is responsible for taking decisions and how they will be taken.
4. The Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and this Constitution.

## 2 How the Council Operates

1. The Council operates the directly elected Mayoral form of Executive. The Council is composed of a Mayor and forty-five Councillors. The Mayor is directly elected by the electors of the Borough, normally for a four-year term of office. The Mayoral election will be held on the same day as the ordinary Council elections, at which Councillors are elected to represent each of the Wards within the Borough every four years. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their Ward. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.
2. The Council may also appoint additional 'Co-opted' Members to certain Committees and Sub-Committees. Co-optees are people who are chosen to represent a specific area of interest or issue of consideration. These representatives are not elected members of the Council and are appointed because of their level of knowledge and experience. These co-opted members make a very useful contribution to discussions and help make the correct decisions in relation to important matters.
3. The Mayor, Councillors and Co-optees are together known as 'Members' of the Authority. Members have to agree to follow a Code of Conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Council's Standards Advisory Committee is responsible for advising Members on the Code of Conduct and ensuring that they receive training on the requirements of the Code, which they are required to observe in carrying out their duties and responsibilities as Members.
4. The Mayor and all Councillors meet together at Council. Meetings of Council are normally open to the public. Here Councillors decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year. Council appoints annually an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Regulatory Committees, a Standards Advisory Committee, and other statutory, advisory and consultative bodies.
5. The Mayor appoints a Deputy Mayor and (up to nine) Cabinet Members who form the Council's Executive, they are responsible for most day to day decisions. The Mayor and other Executive Members meet together as the 'Cabinet'. The Mayor is responsible for the Council's main executive decision-making powers and the overall delivery of Council services.
6. The other executive decision-making bodies are:
  - the King George's Field Charity Board to administer the affairs of the King George's Field, Mile End charity of which the Council is the sole trustee; and
  - the Grants Determination Sub-Committee.

7. The Executive Scheme of Delegation sets out more detail on the Mayor and Executive functions.
8. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is established to review or scrutinise decisions of the Executive and conduct reviews into functions which are the responsibility of the Executive. Section 9 of the Constitution sets out an introduction to role of Overview and Scrutiny and links to more detailed sections later in the Constitution.
9. The Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules (Part B, Section 30) set out in more detail how the Committee and its sub-committees operate.

### **3 How Decisions are Made**

#### **Principles of Decision-Making**

1. All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:
  - a) proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
  - b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
  - c) respect for human rights;
  - d) a presumption in favour of openness;
  - e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
  - f) take account of all relevant matters;
  - g) discount irrelevant matters; and
  - h) explaining what options were considered and giving the reasons for the decision.

#### **Responsibility for Decision-Making**

2. The Council will issue and keep up to date a record of what part of the Council or individual has responsibility for particular types of decisions or decisions relating to particular areas or functions. This record is set out in Part B of this Constitution.
3. The form of the Council's Executive Arrangements is a 'Mayor and Cabinet' model as defined in section 9C of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended). Therefore, decision-making at the Council is split into the following types:
  - 'Executive'
    - Including 'Executive Key Decisions'
  - 'Non-Executive' functions.

#### **Executive Decision Making**

4. The Mayor is responsible for Executive decision-making and is therefore responsible for most day to day decisions. The Mayor can take these decisions at Cabinet, in a Cabinet Sub-Committee or the decisions can be delegated to officers.

5. These decisions must be in line with the Council’s Budget and Policy Framework. If any of these decisions change the Framework then these must be referred to Council.

**Executive Key Decisions**

6. A “key decision” is an executive decision which is likely to:

- A. result in the local authority incurring expenditure or the making of savings of:

Savings	Where the proposal is expected to result in savings of above £1 Million
Revenue expenditure	Where the proposal involves revenue expenditure of above £1 Million
Capital expenditure	Where the proposal involves capital expenditure of above £5 Million

**OR**

- B. be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions.

- i. In considering whether a decision is likely to have a significant impact, the decision maker is to consider the strategic nature of the decision and whether the outcome will have a significant material impact, for better or worse, on the local amenity or wellbeing (including social and environmental impact) of the community or the quality of service provided to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.
- ii. When officers consider the impact on the Community they will, for example, consider the effect on specific groups within that Ward (defined by other characteristics such as ‘age’, ‘culture’ etc) where those groups make up a significant proportion of that Ward’s population.
- iii. In determining the meaning of “significant” for the purposes of these paragraphs, regard must be had to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000.

**In addition to the above, officers will also consider the following guidance when determining if an issue should be treated as a Key Decision:**

7. A decision to approve, update or amend a policy, strategy, plan, scheme (or similar) will only be a key decision if criteria (A) or (B) above would apply to the implementation of the document once approved, updated or amended.
8. Documents listed in Section 7 under the Budget and Policy Framework, are non-executive decisions reserved to Full Council and therefore cannot be key decisions. However, they are required to be prepared and developed by Cabinet in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules at Part B Section 28 of the Constitution.
9. A decision or report in relation to preparation and development of an issue, for example to begin a public consultation exercise, will not normally be a key decision unless criteria (A) or (B) above would also apply to that specific action. Even if the final determination of that issue would result in a Key Decision.
10. A decision not fulfilling the criteria at (A) or (B) above may follow the same process as a key decision if, in the professional opinion of the Chief Executive or the appropriate Corporate Director, it is a matter of particular political sensitivity.
11. A decision which is the same or similar to one taken in the past (for example, the approval of a previous iteration of a plan or strategy), and does not fulfil criteria (A) or (B) above, is not a Key Decision even if the comparable previous decision was identified as a Key Decision.

**Taking Key Decisions**

12. A decision taker, when making a decision may only take a Key Decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part B Section 29 of the Constitution.
13. When Key Decisions are to be made, notice of these decisions must be published in advance, in so far as they can be anticipated. If these Key Decisions are to be taken at an Executive meeting (for example Cabinet) this will generally be open for the public to attend, except for restricted agenda items which include, for example, personal, commercially sensitive or confidential matters.
14. The Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory committee under the provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 but does have certain executive functions and if this Board is making a Key decision then this will be

published in advance. The meeting generally is open for the public to attend, except where restricted matters are being discussed in the same way as for other Executive meetings.

15. Part A, Section 8 provides more detail of Executive Decision Making.

### **Executive Decision Making by Officers**

16. Part B, Section 23 contains the Corporate Scheme of Delegation which must be read in conjunction with the Council-wide Operating Procedures and Directorate Schemes of Delegation published in Part D.
17. These documents set out where Officers have delegated powers to take Executive Decisions. However, the following must always be followed in respect of officer decisions:
  - Officers may not take Key Decisions unless there has been a specific delegation by the Executive.
  - Any officer decision resulting in (revenue or capital) expenditure or savings of over £250,000 must only be taken following consultation with the Mayor and must be published on the Council's website 'as soon as practicable' (and following any guidance from the Monitoring Officer) after the decision has been taken.

### **Non-Executive Decision Making**

18. The Council has responsibility for all Non-Executive functions and for approving the Budget and Policy Framework. The Council, as a whole, retains responsibility for regulatory functions and has a role in holding the Executive to account.

### **Decision-Making by Council**

19. Certain decisions, such as the overall Council Budget, Council tax and the policy framework are reserved to Council. Section 7 sets out more details of how Council operates.



## **Decision-Making by Other Committees and Sub-Committees Established by the Council**

20. Council has established a number of other Committees and Sub-Committees to undertake specific decision-making functions.
21. The following Committees have been established:
  - Audit Committee
  - General Purposes Committee
  - Licensing Committee
  - Pensions Committee
  - Standards Advisory Committee
  - Strategic Development Committee & Development Committee
22. Section 10 provides more information about the Council's Committees.

## **Non-Executive Decision Making by Officers**

23. Part B Sections 16 and 17 and Part D Sections 43 and 44 set out the Council's Non-Executive Functions and any delegations to officers for those functions. Where decisions have been delegated to officers the following must be followed:
  - Any officer decision resulting in (revenue or capital) expenditure or savings of over £250,000 must be published on the Council's website 'as soon as practicable' (and following any guidance from the Monitoring Officer) after the decision has been taken.

## **Decision-Making by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels**

24. The Council has established an Overview and Scrutiny Committee whose main responsibility is to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive.
25. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and any Scrutiny Sub-Committees it appoints, will follow the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and relevant parts of the Council Procedure Rules set out in Part B Section 30 of this Constitution which apply to them when considering any matter.
26. Section 9 also sets out a summary about the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **Decision-Making by Council Bodies Acting as Tribunals**

27. The Council, any Members, Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel or an officer acting as a tribunal, or in a quasi-judicial manner, or determining/considering (other than for the purposes of giving advice) the civil rights and obligations or the criminal responsibility of any person, will follow a proper procedure which accords with the requirements of natural justice and the right to a fair trial contained in Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

## 4 Citizens' Rights

1. Citizens have various rights as set out below. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part B Section 27 of this Constitution.
2. **General Rights:** citizens have a number of general rights including to:
  - vote at Mayoral and Council elections if they are eligible and registered;
  - contact the Mayor or their local Councillor about any matters of concern to them;
  - participate in the Tower Hamlets Partnership and consultative mechanisms or service user groups, if selected or appointed to do so;
  - complain about Council services, actions, the conduct of Members or to highlight potential malpractice or illegality;
  - examine the Council's accounts when open for inspection and make their views known to the external auditor.
3. **Voting and Petitions.** Citizens on the electoral register have the right to vote at elections. All citizens (that is people living, working or studying in the borough) have the right to present personally or to request a Councillor to present a petition on their behalf to Council, the Cabinet, Scrutiny, Regulatory or other Committees/ Sub Committees or Panels, subject to the detailed provisions laid down in the Petition Scheme and the procedures adopted by those bodies.
4. **Participation in Decision Making.** All citizens have the right to participate in Council and Committee meetings and contribute to investigations by Scrutiny Panels. Processes for public participation are set out in the procedures for various Committees and meetings including in Section 26 (Council Procedure Rules) and Section 30 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules). Individual Committees such as the Licensing and Strategic Development Committee will set out procedures to follow for public participation.
5. As a summary, citizens can:
  - access the Constitution;
  - attend and record formal meetings of Council and its Committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
  - attend and record meetings of the Cabinet and any other Executive bodies except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;

- see forward plan notices of forthcoming decisions, plus reports, background papers and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Mayor, the Executive or appropriate Member or Key Decisions taken by officers;
  - see unrestricted reports and associated background papers and any published record of decisions made by Council, other non-executive Committees/ Sub-Committees;
  - speak at Development or Licensing Committees/ Sub-Committees in favour or against planning or licensing applications, subject to the detailed provisions laid down in procedures adopted by those bodies;
  - present petitions or otherwise participate in meetings of Council, the Cabinet, Scrutiny, Regulatory or other Committees, depending on their specific procedure rules, and contribute to investigations by Scrutiny;
6. The Council maintains web pages providing information about its formal decision-making meetings and processes and opportunities for public engagement. These are held at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee).
7. **Compliments and Complaints.** All citizens have the right to:
- i. submit a compliment or comment on the Council and its services
  - ii. complain to the authority itself under its complaints scheme or any other applicable statutory complaints scheme;
  - iii. complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme; and
  - iv. complain the Council's Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members, or to raise a public interest concern if they have evidence which they think shows malpractice, wrongdoing, illegality or risk in the Council and which is not appropriate for consideration under another Council procedure.

### **Citizens' Responsibilities**

8. Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or officers and must not wilfully damage things owned by the Council, Councillors or officers.
9. When attending meetings of Council, Committees/ Sub-Committees/ Panels or the Cabinet, citizens must not behave improperly, offensively or interrupt the business of the meeting as such action will result in their being removed and excluded from the meeting.

10. Where members of the public use specific Council services, for example as a parent of a school pupil or as an occupier of Council land or premises, they have additional rights. These are not covered in this Constitution.

## 5 The Speaker of the Council

1. The position of Speaker of the Council performs the duties often carried out by the post of 'civic mayor'.
2. The Council has decided, in agreeing its Executive Arrangements, that the Speaker of the Council will be the first citizen of the Borough and will perform the majority of civic and ceremonial duties for the Borough. The Mayor will perform those functions as the Council's representative where they relate to the promotion of, or business of, the Council. Any future change to these arrangements will be a matter for the Council to determine.
3. **The Speaker of the Council may not be a member of the Executive.**
4. The Speaker of the Council and the Deputy Speaker will be elected by Council annually and the Speaker will have the following roles and functions:
  - a) to uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution and having sought appropriate advice from the Monitoring Officer, to interpret the Constitution when necessary;
  - b) to preside over meetings of Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community;
  - c) to ensure that Council is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which Councillors who are not on the Cabinet can hold the Mayor and Cabinet Members to account in public;
  - d) to promote public involvement in the Council's activities;
  - e) to be the conscience of the Council; and
  - f) to attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council and s/he determines appropriate.
5. **The Deputy Speaker of the Council will deputise for the Speaker of the Council whenever the Speaker of the Council is unavailable or unable to act.**
6. The order of precedence for civic events shall be as follows, with the Borough's First Citizen representing the Council at Civic Ceremonial functions in the Borough including:
  - Visits of the Royal Family and dignitaries;
  - Civic receptions, luncheons and dinners;
  - Funeral or memorial services;
  - Religious services; and
  - Prize givings.

7. And events outside the Borough including:
  - Those of the Lord Mayor of London;
  - Invitations from other First Citizens to their Borough; and
  - Those of the London Mayors' Association.
  
8. This does not preclude the attendance and involvement of the Mayor and/or other Councillors.

## **6 Members of the Council**

### **Composition and Eligibility**

1. The Council will comprise a directly elected Mayor and 45 Councillors. The Mayor will be elected by the voters of the whole borough; and the Councillors will be elected by the voters of each ward, in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
2. The term 'Member of the Council' (or simply 'Member') as used throughout this Constitution includes both the Mayor and the Councillors and any individuals co-opted to Council Committees and Sub-Committees.
3. Only registered voters of the borough or those living or working here in accordance with the relevant legislation will be eligible to stand for election for the office of Mayor or Councillor.

### **Election and Terms of the Mayor and Councillors**

4. The regular elections of Mayor and Councillors will be held every four years, normally on the first Thursday in May. The term of office of the Mayor and Councillors will be four years and will start on the fourth day after being elected and will finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election.

### **Roles and Functions of all Councillors**

5. All Councillors will:-
  - a) Collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic functions;
  - b) Represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
  - c) Effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents;
  - d) Respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially;
  - e) Participate in the governance of the Council;
  - f) Be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
  - g) Maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.



## **Rights and Duties**

6. Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
7. Councillors will not make public information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Councillor or officer entitled to know it.
8. For these purposes “confidential” and “exempt” are defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part B Section 27 of the Constitution.

## **Cessation of Membership**

9. A Councillor will cease to be a Member if they resign by giving notice in writing, or if they fail to observe the requirement to attend Council meetings as prescribed by section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 or if they are disqualified from holding office by virtue of section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or any other statutory provision.
10. With regard to the requirement to attend meetings, a Councillor must attend at least one relevant meeting during a period of six (6) months to remain qualified to hold office. A relevant meeting includes Council, the Cabinet, any Committee, Sub Committee or external body to which the Councillor has been formally appointed.
11. If a Councillor believes that there is an exceptional and unavoidable reason why they are unable to attend a relevant meeting during a period of six (6) months or to otherwise perform their proper duties as a Councillor for part or all of the same period, the Councillor concerned may seek a dispensation from the Council by writing to the Chief Executive explaining the reason for their unavoidable absence and the period to which the absence will relate. This will be reported to the Council at its next ordinary meeting. The Council will decide whether or not to grant such an exemption to the attendance requirement and will only do so in exceptional circumstances and with evidence that the absence is unavoidable. An exemption cannot be granted if a particular Councillor’s absence has already exceeded six months.

## **Conduct**

12. The Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members will at all times observe the Code of Conduct for Members, Member/Officer Protocol, the Licensing and Planning Codes of Conduct and all other Codes and Protocols set out in Part C of this Constitution or otherwise agreed by the Council from time to time.

## **Allowances**

13. The Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme as set out in Part C Section 39 of this Constitution.

## **Freedom of the Borough**

14. Under Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to confer honorary freedom of the Borough to persons of distinction and to persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to the borough.
15. The title can only be given by a resolution of Council, at a meeting convened for the purpose and the resolution requires a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting for it to be passed.
16. Similarly, a resolution requires a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting to rescind a previously made nomination.
17. Awarding the title of Freedom of the Borough does not confer any rights or responsibilities on that individual. The Council may though choose to engage the individual in the civic business of the borough including such events as:
  - Citizenship Ceremonies
  - Civic Awards
  - Civic and remembrance services
18. Under section 249(10), the admission of a person as honorary freedom of the Borough does not carry any right to attend meetings of the Council or its committees or to claim any allowances for attendance at meetings. However, the Council may choose to cover reasonable expenses for attendance at any of the above listed civic events.

## 7 Council

1. The Council has responsibility for all Non-Executive functions and for approving the budget and policy framework. The Council as a whole also retains responsibility for regulatory functions.

### **Budget and Policy Framework**

2. Policy Framework. The policy framework means the following plans and strategies required to be approved by Council. The table below shows those plans and strategies that are required by statute or the Council to be included in its policy framework:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Relevant Legislation</b>
Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy	Sections 5 & 6 Crime & Disorder Act 1998
Development Plan Documents as well as Plans and Alterations which together comprise the Development Plan	Section 20 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011  Section 27 Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Licensing Authority Policy Statement	Section 349 Gambling Act 2005
Local Transport Plan	Section 108(3) Transport Act 2000
Youth Justice Plan	Section 40 Crime & Disorder Act 1998

3. With the exception of the Development Plan documents, any plans, strategies, policies or schemes which support a policy framework document will not also be part of the Budget and Policy Framework unless the principal document specifies that it is.
4. **Budget.** The budget includes the allocation of financial resources to different services and projects, proposed contingency funds, (including the recommended Council tax base), setting the council tax and decisions relating to the control of the Council's borrowing requirement, the control of its capital expenditure and the setting of virement limits.
5. **Dispute Resolution.** Specific procedures apply where Council does not agree to the Mayor's proposals in respect of budget and policy framework reports. These are set out in the Budget and Policy Framework procedure rules in Section 28 of the Constitution.

## **Housing Land Transfers**

6. Housing Land Transfer means the approval or adoption of applications or a programme of applications (whether in draft form or not) for approval of a programme of disposal of 500 or more properties to a person for which a levy would be payable to the Secretary of State under the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 or to dispose of land used for residential purposes where approval is required under sections 32 or 43 of the Housing Act 1985.

## **Functions of Council**

7. Only Council will exercise the following functions:
  - a) adopting and changing the Constitution (except where the power to make any change is delegated to either the General Purposes Committee or the Monitoring Officer or as set out in Part D of this Constitution);
  - b) approving or adopting the policy framework and the budget;
  - c) subject to the urgency procedure contained in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part B Section 27 of this Constitution, making decisions about any matter in the discharge of an executive function which is covered by the policy framework or the budget where the decision-maker is minded to make it in a manner which would be contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget;
  - d) agreeing and/or amending the terms of reference for Committees/ Sub-Committees, deciding on their composition and making appointments to them, subject to any delegations to Committees and/or officers as set out in this Constitution;
  - e) appointing representatives to those external bodies that do not fall to the Mayor to appoint to, unless the function has been delegated by the Council or this Constitution;
  - f) adopting an allowances scheme for Members;
  - g) the determination of matters relating to Community Governance Reviews as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, unless the matter has been delegated by the Council or this Constitution.
  - h) changing the name of the area, conferring the title of honorary alderman or conferring the freedom of the borough;
  - i) confirming the appointment of the Head of the Paid Service;
  - j) making, amending, revoking, re-enacting or adopting bylaws and promoting or opposing the making of local legislation or personal Bills;
  - k) adoption and amendment of the authority's Code of Conduct for Members and other Codes and Protocols comprising the ethical framework;

- l) adopting the Council's Pay Policy Statement each year as required by the Localism Act 2011; and agreeing any in-year changes to the Pay Policy Statement.
- m) arranging for the discharge of any other functions of the authority which are not executive functions;
- n) subject to any matters delegated to Committees/ Sub-Committees or officers, determining all local choice functions as described in Part B of this Constitution which the Council decides should be undertaken by itself rather than the Executive;
- o) accepting the delegation of a power or function from another local authority; and
- p) all other matters which, by law, must be reserved to Council.

### **Council Meetings**

- 8. There are four types of Council meeting:
  - a) the annual meeting;
  - b) the budget meeting(s),
  - c) ordinary meetings, and
  - d) extra-ordinary meetings,
- 9. They will be conducted in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules in Part B Section 26 of this Constitution.
- 10. The Mayor and all Councillors may attend meetings of Council and may participate as set out in the Council Procedure Rules.

### **Responsibility for Functions**

- 11. As part of this Constitution, the Council will maintain a document setting out the "Responsibilities for the Council's functions" which are not the responsibility of the Executive.
- 12. Decisions relating to the functions listed in the "Responsibilities for the Council's functions" document will be allocated by legislation, therefore, if the legislation changes, the Constitution will be changed by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with delegated powers set out in Part D of the Constitution.
- 13. Subject to Section 3, Paragraph 27, the Council meeting will follow the Council Procedure Rules set out in Part B of this Constitution when considering any matter.

## 8 The Mayor and the Executive

### The Role of the Executive

1. The Executive will carry out all the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council, whether by law or under this Constitution.
2. Subject to Section 3, Paragraph 27, the Mayor and Executive will follow the decision-making procedures set out in Part B of this Constitution when considering any matter.
3. The following parts of the Constitution, insofar as they relate to executive functions, constitute the Executive Arrangements:
  - Section 3 (How decisions are made)
  - Section 8 (The Mayor and the Executive) and Section 29 (Executive Procedure Rules)
  - Section 9 (Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels) and Section 30 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules)
  - Section 12 (Joint Arrangements and Partnership Working)
  - Section 18 (Responsibility for Executive Functions)
  - Section 22 (Terms of Reference – The Executive)
  - Section 27 (Access to Information Procedure Rules)
  - Section 29 (Executive Procedure Rules)

### Form and Composition

4. The Executive will consist of the Mayor and between two and nine Councillors appointed by the Mayor, called Cabinet Members. One of the Cabinet Members will be appointed by the Mayor as the Statutory Deputy Mayor. When the Mayor and Cabinet Members meet together in Committee this is known as a meeting of the Cabinet.
5. The King George's Field Charity Board and the Grants Determination Sub-Committee are also Executive Bodies having executive decision-making powers. The Health and Wellbeing Board also has certain Executive functions

### The Mayor

6. The Mayor will exercise strategic political leadership by developing and communicating clearly to citizens, businesses and service users the authority's purpose and vision and its intended policy outcomes. In

developing strategic policy the Mayor will work closely with the Chief Executive and have regard to advice tendered.

7. The Mayor will be a person elected to that position by the electors of the borough in the Mayoral election. In the event that a serving Councillor of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets is elected as Mayor, a vacancy shall be declared in that person's Council seat and a by-election shall be held (if required) in accordance with the relevant legislation.
8. The term of office of the Mayor will normally be four years. They will take office on the fourth day after their election and will continue in office until the fourth day after their successor is elected, unless they die, are disqualified or resign.

### **The Statutory Deputy Mayor**

9. The Statutory Deputy Mayor will be a Councillor appointed to that position by the Mayor from among the Cabinet members.
10. The Mayor may replace the Statutory Deputy Mayor at any time but otherwise the Statutory Deputy Mayor shall remain in post for the duration of the Mayor's term of office, unless:
  - a) they resign from office; or
  - b) they are no longer a Councillor
11. The Statutory Deputy Mayor shall have authority to exercise the Mayor's powers only in the event that for any reason the Mayor is unable to act at any time.

### **Other Executive Members**

12. The Mayor shall appoint between two and nine Councillors to be members of the Executive (Cabinet Members) alongside the Mayor. All of the Cabinet Members must be serving Councillors of the authority. The Mayor may allocate to each Cabinet Member a portfolio of responsibility for Council business relating to their role as an Executive Member (see 17-18 below).
13. The Mayor must appoint one of the Cabinet Members as the Statutory Deputy Mayor.
14. The Mayor may replace or remove a Cabinet Member, and/or may vary or delete their portfolio responsibilities, at any time.

15. Executive Members shall hold office until:
  - a) They are removed or replaced by the Mayor;
  - b) They resign from office; or
  - c) They are no longer a Councillor.
  
16. In the case of a vacancy arising in any post of Cabinet Member the Mayor may appoint a Councillor to the vacant post at his/her discretion.

### **Cabinet Responsibilities**

17. The Executive Members will have portfolios as set out in the Executive Scheme of Delegation within Section 29 of this Constitution.
  
18. The portfolios may be subject to change from time to time at the discretion of the Mayor and will be updated by the Monitoring Officer as soon as reasonably practicable when so advised by the Mayor.

### **Proceedings of the Cabinet**

19. Proceedings of the Cabinet shall take place in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Section 29 of the Constitution.

### **Responsibility for Functions**

20. The Monitoring Officer will maintain a list as part of this Constitution, setting out which individual Cabinet Members or Committees of the Executive, officers or joint arrangements (see Section 29 – Executive Procedure Rules) are responsible for the exercise of particular executive functions.



## **9 Overview and Scrutiny**

1. Overview and Scrutiny provide an important check and balance function to ensure that the decisions of the Executive, Mayor and Cabinet are in the best interests of residents and that the council is providing high quality services.
2. The scrutiny process provides non-executive councillors and co-opted Members with an opportunity to examine the services provided by the council and partner agencies, ask questions on how decisions are made and to consider whether service improvements can be put in place. Members of all political parties can work together in a challenging and constructive way to propose improvements not only to the way the council works, but also to other public services in the local area more generally.

### **Scrutiny Committees and Sub-Committees**

3. Council will appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discharge the functions conferred by sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000; section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 (local authority scrutiny of crime and disorder matters); or any functions which may be conferred on it by virtue of regulations under section 244(2ZE) of the National Health Service Act 2006 (local authority scrutiny of health matters).
4. Council will appoint a Member to serve as the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee will appoint its own Vice-Chair.
5. The Committee will appoint a Sub-Committee to discharge the Council's functions under the National Health Service Act 2006 (including scrutiny of the local health service) to be known as the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee and it may also appoint such other Sub-Committees as the Committee considers appropriate to carry out its work programme. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will appoint Members as Chairs of any such sub-committees. The Sub-Committees will appoint their own Vice-Chairs.
6. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Scrutiny Sub-Committees will generally meet in public and will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Procedure Rules in Section 30 of this Constitution.

### **Scrutiny Leads**

7. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may appoint from amongst its Members, 'Scrutiny Lead Members' with responsibility for specific portfolios.

## **General Role and Responsibilities**

8. Section 30 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedures Rules) sets out in more detail how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Sub-Committees will operate. In summary, their roles include the following:
  - Scrutiny of decisions or actions taken by the executive.
  - Provide advice and reports to the Executive on key issues including making recommendations to Council and/or the Mayor/Executive.
  - Question Members of the Executive and/or Committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area.
  - Liaise with external organisations operating in the area to ensure the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working including by reviewing the performance of public bodies in the area and inviting reports from them.
  - Exercise the right to 'call in' for reconsideration decisions made but not yet implemented by the Mayor/Executive.
  - Assist the Council and the Executive in the development of its budget and policy framework and in the in-depth analysis of policy issues.
  - Look to enhance community participation in the development of policy options including through petitions to Scrutiny meetings following the rules set out in the Council's Petition Scheme.
  - To consider issues under the 'Councillor Call for Action' procedure.

## **Reporting**

9. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports annually to Council on its work.
10. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Sub-Committees will report to Council, Cabinet or the Mayor or appropriate Cabinet member and make recommendations, as appropriate. This process is set out in more detail in Section 30 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

## **Further Information**

11. The following sections of the Constitution contain more information about the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function:
  - Section 19 – Terms of Reference for Council and Committees
  - Section 21 – Terms of Reference for Joint Committees
  - Section 30 – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules
  - Section 53 – Scrutiny Sub-Committee Procedure Rules

## 10 Regulatory and Non-Executive Committees

1. Council will appoint the Committees set out in Part B to discharge the functions described in the "Responsibility for Functions" information also in Part B.
2. Council will appoint a Member to serve as Chair of each Committee that it appoints under this Section. If the Council does not, the Committee may appoint a Chair from amongst the Members appointed to the Committee by the Council.
3. Each Committee may appoint a Vice-Chair from amongst its Members.
4. Except where prevented in law, or this Constitution, any Committee may establish one or more sub-committees to undertake specific areas of decision making that would normally be the responsibility of the parent Committee.
5. Subject to Section 3, Paragraph 27, other Council Committees and Sub-Committees will follow those parts of the Council Procedure Rules set out in Section 27 of this Constitution as apply to them.

### Development Control and Licensing

6. Two regulatory Committees often of general interest to the public are those that deal with Development Control and Licensing.
7. **Development Control** – Tower Hamlets Council is a local planning authority for its area (other than parts of Bromley by Bow and Fish Island which currently fall under the London Legacy Development Corporation). Local Planning Authorities must make a Local Plan for their area and make decisions on planning applications for new development that are submitted.
8. The executive Mayor, Cabinet and full Council are responsible for decisions about the Council's Local Plan. Most decisions on planning applications are made by senior planning officers under powers that are delegated to them. Applications for the largest scale developments or those which have attracted significant public interest are determined by one of the Council's two planning committees - the **Development Committee** and the **Strategic Development Committee**. They make decisions in public, in line with policies in the Council's Local Plan and other development plan documents, such as the London Plan. The Committees will hear representations from members of the public who can register to speak in support of, or in objection to, an application. The terms of reference for both committees are set out in Section 19 of the Constitution."

9. The **Licensing Committee** oversees the discharge of all licensing functions of the Council as the Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 (excluding the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy). The Licensing Committee also reviews licensing fees and charges and oversees the Licensing activities of the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service.
10. The Licensing Committee also has a responsibility to consider and determine matters under Section 2 of the Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 regarding the control of sex establishments within the borough. It also considers and determines matters under the London Local Authorities Act 1991 in respect of premises providing or wishing to provide special treatments within the borough where objections have been received and not withdrawn.
11. The Licensing Committee establishes **Licensing Sub-Committees** to consider Licensing matters under the Licensing Act 2003. The Sub Committees determine applications to grant, vary a license where representations have been made, or where an application to review a licence has been made. The Sub Committee is established to perform the functions of the Licensing Authority with a view to promoting the four licensing objectives:
  - The prevention of public nuisance
  - The prevention of crime and disorder
  - Public safety
  - The protection of children from harm
12. The meetings are an opportunity for councillors to make a decision based on the points of view of all relevant parties.
13. The Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub-Committee Terms of Reference are at Part B Section 19 and the Licensing Code of Conduct is at Part C Section 34.

## **11 The Standards Advisory Committee and the Code of Conduct for Members**

### **Code of Conduct**

12. In accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for Members together with arrangements for dealing with any complaint of a breach of the Code including the appointment of an Independent Person. The Code of Conduct and the arrangements for dealing with any complaint of a breach of the Code are set out at Part C, Section 31 of this Constitution.

### **Standards Advisory Committee**

13. In order to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, the Council at its Annual Meeting will establish a Standards Advisory Committee using its powers under section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.
14. The Standards Advisory Committee shall have the power to create sub-committees in order to discharge its advisory role.
15. The Standards Advisory Committee's composition shall be set out in its Terms of Reference. It includes Councillors and Independent Co-opted Members (but may not include the Mayor or more than one Cabinet Member).
16. The Standards Advisory Committee has a set of procedures which govern its arrangements. These are set out Part B Section 19 and Part D Section 53.

### **Independent Persons**

17. The Council has appointed two statutory Independent Persons to assist in dealing with complaints of alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Members under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011. They are not co-opted member of the Standards Advisory Committee but may attend and observe any meeting of the Committee or a sub-committee established by it.

## 12 Joint Arrangements and Partnership Working

### Arrangements to Promote Well-Being.

1. The Council or the Executive in order to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of the whole or any part of the borough, may:
  - a) enter into arrangements or agreements with any person or body;
  - b) co-operate with, or facilitate or co-ordinate the activities of, any person or body; and
  - c) exercise on behalf of that person or body any functions of that person or body.

### Joint Arrangements

2. The Council, or any officer delegated under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, may establish joint arrangements with one or more local authorities and/or their Executives to exercise functions in any of the participating authorities, or advise the Council on any matter. Such arrangements may involve the appointment of a joint Committee with these other local authorities and/ or their Executives.
3. The Mayor or Executive may establish joint arrangements with one or more local authorities to exercise functions that are executive functions. Such arrangements may involve the appointment of joint Committees with these other local authorities and/ or their Executives.
4. The Mayor or Executive may only appoint Executive Members to a joint Committee except where:
  - i. the joint committee is discharging a function in relation to five or more relevant authorities; or
  - ii. the function which the joint committee is discharging is a function which is required by statute to be discharged by a joint committee,
5. Every person appointed to the joint committee by the Executive may be a member of the Executive or of the Council.
6. The political balance requirements do not apply to the appointments in 4 and 5 above.

## **Current Joint Committees**

7. Pursuant to section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 the Council is a member of a number of joint committees under the umbrella of London Councils (formerly known as the Association of London Government or the ALG). These are-
  - London Councils' Committee (known as the Leaders' Committee)
  - London Councils' Grants Committee
  - London Council's Pensions CIV Sectoral Joint Committee
  - London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee
8. Additionally, the Council is also a member of the following joint committees:
  - Inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
  - Joint Committee of the Six Growth Boroughs
  - London Housing Consortium
9. These Joint Committees shall have delegated authority to discharge the functions of the Council as per the terms of reference for these joint committees as set out in Part B of this Constitution.

## **Access to Information**

10. Access to information rules are contained in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part B of the Constitution.
11. If all the members of any joint Committee are Members of the Executive in each of the participating authorities then its access to information regime is the same as that applied to the Executive.
12. If the joint Committee contains Members who are not on the Executive of any participating authority the access to information rules in Part V of the Local Government Act 1972 will apply.

## **Delegation to and from Other Local Authorities**

13. The Council or the Mayor or Executive or any officer delegated under the Council's Scheme of Delegation may delegate their powers and functions to another local authority or, in certain circumstances, the Executive of another local authority.
14. The decision whether or not to accept such a delegation from another local authority shall be for Council or the Mayor or Executive or officer delegated

under the Council's Scheme of Delegation as appropriate depending upon whether or not the powers or functions are the responsibility of the Executive.

### **Contracting Out**

15. The Mayor or Executive may contract out to another body or organisation functions which may be exercised by an officer and which are subject to an order under section 70 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994, or under contracting arrangements where the contractor acts as the Council's agent under usual contracting principles, providing there is no delegation of the Council's discretionary decision making.

### **Partnership Working – General Arrangements**

16. The Tower Hamlets Strategic Partnership brings together all of the key stakeholders in the borough – residents, the Mayor and Council, Police, the health service, other public services, voluntary and community groups, faith communities and businesses – with the aim of working together to improve the quality of life of people who live and work in the borough. The Council provides support for the administration of the Partnership but the Partnership is independent of the local authority.
17. The Partnership delivers its vision through The Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-23, which has the key objective - tackling inequality by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough – as well as four themes:
  - A better deal for children & young people – this is about ensuring young people are supported to build on their aspirations and achieve their full potential.
  - Good jobs and employment – this is about helping people be job ready by taking up the skills training available, as well as working with employers to make sure they have practises in place which support the community, through inclusive recruitment, responsible employment and fair access to jobs.
  - Strong, resilient and safe communities – this is about ensuring people are active, and reducing isolation and the fear of crime.
  - Better health and wellbeing – person-centred care, empowering people to live on their own independently. It's about improving the quality of life for our residents, tackling health inequalities and managing demand for services.
18. In order to deliver its vision, the Partnership will review and establish arrangements to support its operation including executive support, development and delivery of initiatives, engagement with stakeholders as well as performance management.



## 13 Officers of the Council

### Appointments

1. General. The Council may engage such staff (referred to as officers) as it considers necessary to carry out its functions.
2. Chief Officers. The Council will engage persons for the following posts who will be designated chief officers:
  - Chief Executive (designated Head of Paid Service)
  - Corporate Director, Children and Culture
  - Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community
  - Corporate Director, Place
  - Corporate Director, Resources (designated Chief Finance Officer)
3. The above posts may be subject to change from time to time in which case this Constitution will be updated as soon as reasonably practicable to reflect any change in the designated chief officers.

### Statutory Officers

4. In addition to the designation of the Head of Paid Service statutory position to the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer position to the Corporate Director, Resources, the Council has designated the Monitoring Officer position to the Director of Legal. Part B Section 25 of the Constitution sets out the main statutory officer allocations.
5. **The Management Structure.** Chief Executive will determine and publicise a description of the overall structure of the Council showing the management structure and deployment of officers. This is set out below.

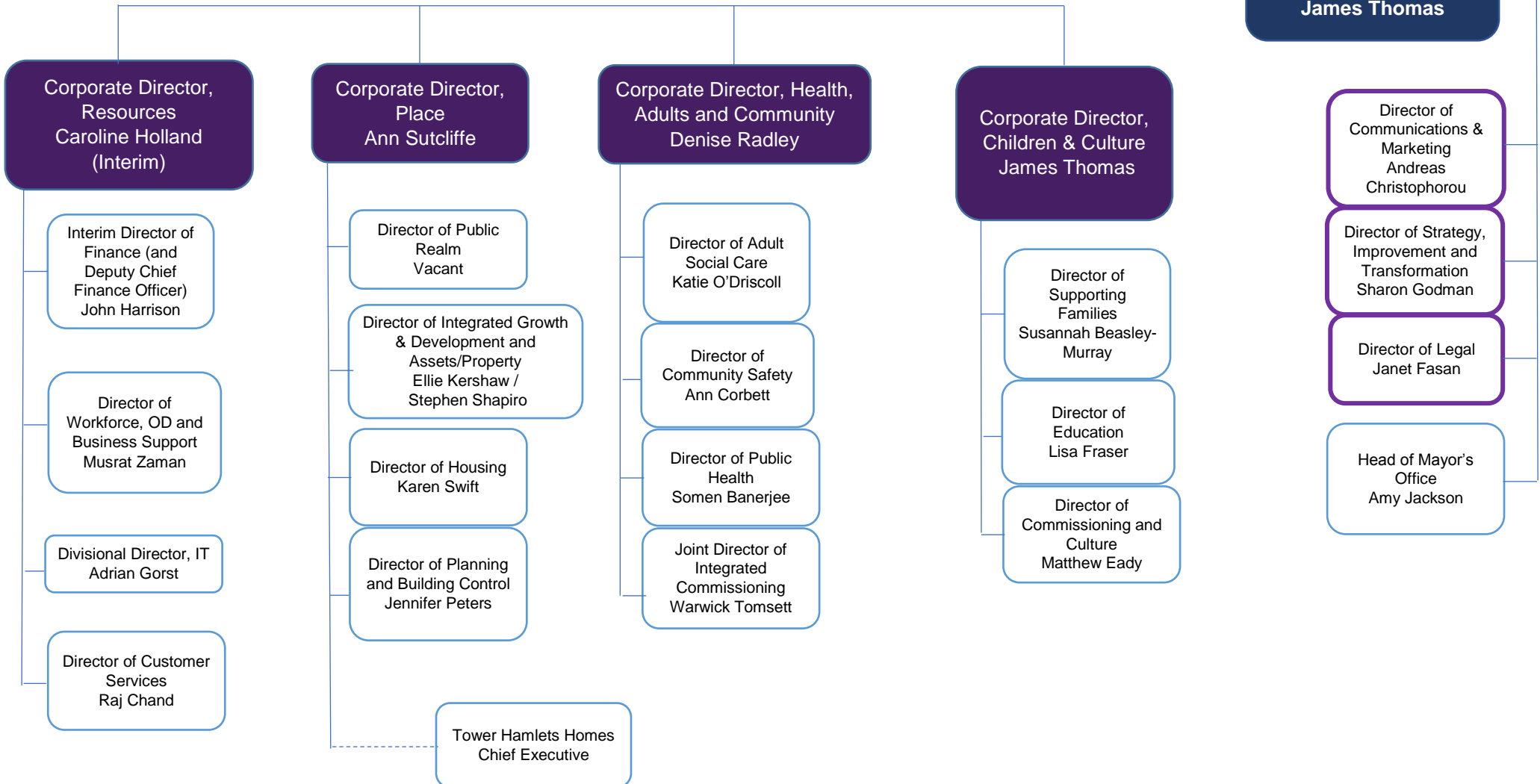
### Conduct

6. Officers will comply with the Employees' Code of Conduct and the Member/ Officer Relations' Protocol set out in Part C of this Constitution.

# TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL CURRENT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

**Interim Chief Executive  
Stephen Halsey**

**Deputy Chief Executive  
(Appointed from current CLT members)  
James Thomas**



## **14 Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters**

### **Financial Management**

1. The management of the Council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules set out in Part C of this Constitution.

### **Contracts**

2. Every contract made by the Council shall be in writing and will comply with the Contracts Procedure Rules set out in Part C of this Constitution.

### **Legal Proceedings**

3. The Director of Legal is authorised to institute, defend, settle or participate in any legal proceedings in any case where such action is necessary to give effect to decisions of the Council or in any case where they consider such action is necessary to protect the Council's interests. They may designate nominated officers to carry out this function on their behalf.

### **Authentication of Documents**

4. Where a document is necessary to any legal procedure or proceedings on behalf of the Council, it will be signed by the Director of Legal or any person authorised by them, unless any enactment requires otherwise, or the Council has given requisite authority to some other person.
5. Contracts with a value exceeding £250,000 must either be signed by at least two officers of the authority. Subject to the provisions of Paragraph 7 below they may also be signed or under the common seal of the Council attested by at least one officer.
6. For the avoidance of doubt any document that is required to be signed, may be signed by any authorised person by any form of electronic signature.

### **Common Seal of the Council**

7. The Common Seal of the Council will be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Director of Legal. A decision of the Council, or of any part of it, will be sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the decision. The Director of Legal generally requires all documents to be signed in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 above, but has the discretion to require in certain circumstances that the Council's Common Seal will be affixed to some documents. The Common Seal will be affixed to those documents which in the opinion of the Director of Legal should be sealed. The

affixing of the Common Seal will be attested by the Corporate Director, Governance or some other person authorised by them. The Seal may be applied electronically.

### **Retention of Documents**

8. The Director of Legal may declare that any document required to be retained by the Council may be retained either jointly with a paper copy of such document, or in electronic format only.

## 15 Suspending, Interpreting and Changing the Constitution and Changes to Executive Arrangements

### Suspension of the Constitution

1. **Limit to Suspension.** The Rules specified below may be suspended by bodies indicated to the extent permitted within those Rules and the law.
2. **Procedure to Suspend.** A motion to suspend any Rules will not be moved without notice unless at least half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of the voting members of the meeting in question are present. The extent and duration of suspension will be proportionate to the result to be achieved, taking account of the purposes of the Constitution.
3. **Rules Capable of Suspension.** The following Rules may be suspended:
  - i. Council Procedure Rules (Council as well as Cabinet and all other Committees and Sub-committees to which Rule 23 of the Council Procedure Rules applies)
  - ii. Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Council)
  - iii. Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
  - iv. Any Committee / Body Procedure Rules listed in Part D.

### Interpretation

4. The ruling of the Speaker of the Council as to the construction or application of this Constitution or as to any proceedings of the Council shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Council. Such interpretations will have regard to the purposes of this Constitution contained Section 1.

### Publication

5. The Monitoring Officer will ensure (1) that the Constitution is published on the Council's website and that copies are available for inspection at the Town Hall; and (2) can be purchased by members of the local press and the public on payment of a reasonable fee.
6. The Monitoring Officer will ensure the Constitution is made available to all Members and citizens and is updated as necessary.
7. For the avoidance of doubt, where authority to make changes to any part of the constitution has been delegated to the Monitoring Officer, or any other officer and the change is not reported to the General Purposes Committee or

Council, the change will be published direct to the website via the officer decision portal.

### **Reviews of the Constitution**

8. The Officer scheme of delegation sets out the Monitoring Officer's responsibility for reviewing and maintaining an up to date Constitution.

### **Changes to the Constitution**

9. The Monitoring Officer can approve all non-material changes to the Constitution including those that reflect decisions taken by the Council or changes in legislation or to correct matters of fact;
10. The Monitoring Officer can recommend to Council or General Purposes Committee for approval any material changes to Parts A to C of the Constitution with the exception of the Executive Scheme of Delegation (Section 30) which will be amended by the Monitoring Officer should the Mayor amend his Executive Scheme of Delegation.
11. The introduction to Part D of the Constitution sets out the delegated authority to amend each Part D Section. Unless indicated otherwise, the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to amend Part D documents in consultation with the Chief Executive.
12. All Sections of the Constitution remain in place unless explicitly revised or removed.

### **Change of Executive Arrangements**

13. The Council must take reasonable steps to consult with local electors and other interested persons in the area when drawing up proposals for a change to its Executive Arrangements.