

## Item 11: Member Questions and Answers

11.1	<b>Question from Councillor Amin Rahman</b>	<p>Could the Lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for 6 years under the previous administration.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council has signed off audited accounts for financial years 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. The council has published draft accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 – these accounts are subject to audit. The 2022/23 draft accounts are expected to be published by the end of January 2024 – which will also be subject to audit.</p>
11.2	<b>Question from Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury</b>	<p>Can the Cabinet Member follow up on suggestions at the recent Health and Wellbeing Board that housing officers be part of the consultation in combatting drugs work?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>As part of the Combatting Drugs Partnership strategy, Housing Officers have been engaged as part of the strategy development. The Housing Senior Management Team considered the priority areas on the 6th of November 2023 and the fuller draft document was circulated for them to comment. Housing officers were also present at the initial workshop on the 27th of July 2023. The Hostels Forum was consulted on the 19th of October 2023. A further discussion is planned for Tower Hamlets Homes officers to comment on the draft strategy.</p> <p>The strategy should be completed in February and each area will have an action plan and group that oversees the delivery of actions sitting beneath the strategy. One of the priorities identified is to provide settings that sustain recovery - housing colleagues across all service areas will be invited to help develop actions within that area, providing future opportunities to shape the direction of services and our approach as a partnership.</p>
11.3	<b>Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir</b>	<p>Residents in Wharton House in Bethnal Green East recently went without heating and hot water for weeks, and in some cases over a month. In an emergency such as this can the Lead Member tell us what the council doing to a) ensure that the registered provider, in this</p>

case One Housing is supporting residents and b) deploy its own resources to assist those most vulnerable.

**Response**

The outage at Wharton House was caused by a defective boiler that unfortunately took several weeks to repair. One Housing Riverside was in regular contact with residents to provide updates on the progress of the work as well supporting them with a Resident Liaison Officer who was on hand to provide information and individual support for those that needed it. Portable heaters were also provided by One Housing for those residents that required them. We are also aware One Housing Riverside was communicating with the Mayor's Office to keep them abreast of changes in the scheduled completion date, and reassurance that compensation would be provided to residents once the repairs had been completed.

Officers are working with the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum that consists of the main RPs in the borough, (including One Housing Riverside), to have a protocol in place for communicating service failures. Where a failure is reported that is likely to have an adverse effect on residents within their housing stock RPs have agreed to notify residents as well as the Council and the Lead Member as soon as possible. The notification should include details of the nature of the problem, what they doing to resolve it, how they are supporting affected residents and when they expect the problem to be rectified.

RPs have also agreed to keep the Council and residents updated as remedial works progress and outline details of any issues likely to delay completion dates conveyed to residents. This will ensure the Council has advance knowledge of issues that residents are likely to refer to Members so they can be armed with information to respond to any complaints received.

The effect of a service failure could mean residents are affected in a multitude of different ways. Where that happens, it is incumbent on RPs to support, and where necessary, compensate residents using their own resources. If for any reason that does not happen, we will liaise the RP concerned to help residents get the support they need. If an RP refuses to comply, we will encourage residents to raise a complaint with the RP concerned using their formal Complaints Procedure. Once this

		<p>process has been exhausted residents can then refer the RP to the Housing Ombudsman Service for further investigation and enforcement action if necessary.</p>
<p><b>11.4</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Marc Francis</b></p>	<p>Can the Mayor and Lead Member provide details of the number of applications that were in the queue awaiting an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment in each month since April 2022? It would also be helpful to know how many assessments were carried out (a) within and (b) outside the two-month target time, broken down by (i) Homelessness and (ii) Lettings in each of 2022/23 and so far in 2023/24?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The team does not hold the historical data requested regarding how many housing need assessments (along with our other non-housing need assessment tasks) are received per month, when they are allocated or when advice reports are completed, however we can provide data relating to the numbers of people still on the waiting list covering the period requested:</p> <p>Homeless waiting list – 13 total  Aug 23 – 4  Oct 23 – 2  Nov 23 – 6  Dec 23 – 1</p> <p>Lettings cases waiting list – 170 total  June 23 – 20  July 23 – 16  Aug 23 – 32  Sep 23 – 38  Oct 23 – 17  Nov 23 – 30  Dec 23 – 11  Jan 24 – 6</p> <p>Occupational Therapists (OT) carry out a wide range of duties in addition to housing need assessments, including viewings, new build adaptations and equipment follow-ups, as well as duties related to social care.</p> <p>By its very nature OT assessments are time consuming as it often involves home visits and this means a limited number can be completed each day. The number of requests for assessments involving autistic household member(s) has increased significantly, which requires a</p>

		<p>home visit and often in non-school hours which can limit appointment time.</p> <p>Admin support for the team is being sourced, which will free up OTs to concentrate on housing needs assessments rather than diary management.</p> <p>Furthermore, since December new referrals are being filtered to make sure referrals are appropriate i.e. applicant is mobility impaired and requires an OT assessment.</p>
11.5	<p><b>Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed</b></p>	<p>I thank the current administration for introducing a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order to curb drug related Anti-Social behaviour, particularly the use of NOX (laughing gas) on our streets. Can the Lead Member set out the impact this has had in addressing the problem to date?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>In May 2021, following growing public concerns about the use of Nitrous Oxide and associated antisocial behaviour, the Council introduced a Public Space Protection Order. One of only two in London. This allowed Council Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to people using or in possessing psychoactive substances, including nitrous oxide, where they were causing or likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance, or annoyance to members of the public. Between May 2021 and November 2023, 220 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to address this issue.</p> <p>In November 2023, the Government changed the Misuse of Drugs Act, to include Nitrous Oxide as a Class C drug. This makes Nitrous Oxide illegal to possess and takes it outside of the scope of the current PSPO. We will continue to support police enforcement of this drug through THEOs and CCTV.</p> <p>In addition to our enforcement work, and in partnership Queen Mary’s University, Barts Health NHS Trust, the Police, and Osmani Trust, we have developed our groundbreaking “Know the Risks” project. The project has three main aims.</p> <p>(1) Prevention through borough-wide educational workshops to raise awareness of the dangers of NOX abuse in diverse settings including schools, colleges, places of worship, and community hubs. These workshops are the first of their kind in the UK.</p>

		<p>These prevention workshops have already reached 2000 individuals, with plans to further embed them in schools.</p> <p>We are working with the police to establish crucial referral pathways to connect individuals with our prevention and diversion program. This is to steer young individuals away from the path of criminalisation. All our enforcement officers have undergone specialised training to deliver harm minimisation and interventions on the street. The Met Police are seeking to replicate our successful model in other London boroughs.</p> <p>(2) the second objective is to improve the NOX-treatment pathway in East London hospitals. This is to address the rising health burden associated with NOX-related harm. At the Royal London Hospital, this care pathway supported around 200 patients in the last year.</p> <p>(3) The 3rd objective centres on advancing research led by Professor Alastair Noyce (our partner) into the significant health effects of NOX.</p> <p>Our response to the dangers posed by Nitrous Oxide are holistic and collaborative, addressing challenges in our borough. Through education, diversion, and proactive healthcare measures, we strive to create a safer and more informed community.</p>
11.6	<p><b>Question from Councillor Mufedah Bustin</b></p>	<p>Following the allocation of NCIL to fund the Mayor’s Community Grants programme, when will councillors receive copies of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the legal advice provided to the Mayor validating the use of NCIL in this way</li> <li>2) the breakdown of NCIL allocation to grants at a project and location level</li> </ol> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>No external legal advice was obtained regarding the use of NCIL (Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy) for the Grants process. Internal legal input and approval can be seen in the Cabinet Report from June 2023 that adopted the new NCIL approach. The external legal advice referred to at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the Mayor’s Community Grants Programme was in relation to the grants process itself, not the funding source. In a response to a previous members enquiry regarding that legal advice, the response confirmed that the advice is subject to legal professional privilege and is</p>

		<p>therefore considered to be exempt from disclosure at the present time.</p> <p>A briefing note on the breakdown of the NCIL allocation to grants in each NCIL area is being drafted to go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee early this year.</p>
11.7	<p><b>Question from Councillor Harun Miah</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member provide an update on progress with senior management recruitment and achieving a workforce to reflect the community - in Tower Hamlets?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>7 senior management posts have recently been advertised. Recruitment is ongoing and three appointments have been made so far. Two of the candidates appointed will increase our representation of Black, Asian, and Multi-Ethnic staff at senior level.</p>
11.8	<p><b>Question from Councillor Asma Islam</b></p>	<p>Could the Mayor provide us with an update of the conversations he has had with THCH regarding the condition of Vollasky house?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Mayor and his office, along with Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury have been in correspondence with THCH about issues relating to a number of properties in Vollasky House.</p> <p>Mr Speaker, recently the Mayor's team worked with THCH to support residents of Vollasky House affected by a long-standing water leak. They helped to establish the source of the leak as well as ensure repairs to the damaged ceiling were carried out in a timely fashion while residents were moved to a place of safety.</p> <p>Mr Speaker, the Mayor is aware of the wider problems in the block, particularly the roof of the building, and despite having limited powers, is committed to getting this addressed. As the Mayor's Lead Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding, I have reached out to THCH about a number of their problematic blocks including Vollasky House. I have been contacted by many residents aggrieved about the lack of support with repairs and general maintenance. I hope THCH will respond so these concerns lead to swift remedial action.</p>

		<p>Mr speaker, I want to remind Labour Councillors that it was the Mayor's team that were on the ground supporting residents of Vollasky House during Christmas holidays. It was the Mayor and his team who stood up for residents and pressed THCH for support, and it was the Mayor and his team that have pushed for better accountability of Housing Associations like THCH.</p>
11.9	<p><b>Question from Councillor Abdul Mannan</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member update us on progress with the recommendations following the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place in September last year?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The LGA published their report in December. This set out 18 core recommendations. The Council published its action plan and supporting statement on the same day on the Council Web Site, welcoming the report and outlining its response to it. The Action Plan sets out a wide range of actions responding to the core recommendations, each action linked to the relevant LGA recommendation. Some critical actions have already been delivered such as the long outstanding sign off of historic council accounts and the publication of Annual Governance Statements. Also, the Council is well advanced with the preparation of its Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is on target for final approval in February 2024. The indicative dates for delivery of the actions appearing on the Action Plan will be updated at the end of January following the completion of scoping work currently underway. Dialogue has started with the LGA to programme a light touch progress check in the summer and we hope to have agreed the date with the LGA by the end of January.</p>
11.10	<p><b>Question from Councillor Asma Begum</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member inform me what new investment there is in the 2024-25 council budget related to the council's net zero commitments?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Previously we have agreed multi-year projects as part of the Mayors Energy Fund to deliver net zero carbon projects, these projects include renewable energy generation such as photovoltaic panels on Council buildings, Community Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Generation project to support community groups, Residential Energy Efficiency Project to support our residents and a tree planting scheme to improve biodiversity in the borough, these projects are currently being delivered.</p>

		<p>There are no new investment planned in the 2024-25 council budget related to the council's net zero commitments. We have £3 million in the carbon fund that is unallocated and will go towards funding new net zero carbon commitments, these will include behaviour change projects for the community and residents so that we can take them on the journey to net zero, further investment to improve council assets to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs to the Council, support schools to achieve net zero carbon, investigate decarbonisation opportunities across all sectors and pilot innovation such</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Material re-use initiatives – project exploring sustainable city living and low waste initiatives</li> <li>• City Soil – food waste scheme to soil</li> <li>• Biodiesel - cooking oil refining to provide biodiesel to LBTH fleet, power production through generators</li> <li>• Embodied Carbon Construction project – pilot programme to provide space for material storage resulting from demolition / construction activities</li> </ul> <p>We will also explore all the external grant funding available and in most cases these require match funding by the Council, therefore we will need to carefully target our investment in this area to ensure we maximise the opportunity and get best value for money.</p>
11.11	<p><b>Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain</b></p>	<p>Could the Lead Member share feedback from the Women In Business Festive Fair last month? What was on offer and how well was it attended?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Women in Business Festive Fair 2023 ran from 16 – 23rd December in the Grocer's Wing of the Town Hall with the aim to support local women in the borough to showcase their businesses, develop a new business and/or access business support seminars. To drive footfall and support families to attend, art &amp; craft sessions, facepainting, a jazz band and dance performances also took place.</p> <p>The event also supported the establishment of the new Town Hall in Whitechapel as a venue space for similar future events, and the marketing and promotion of Whitechapel and its local businesses and market traders by attracting visitors to shop, eat and play in the area.</p>

		<p>The event featured 25 women trading in a wide variety of items. These included Bangladeshi, Indian, and Pakistani jewellery and clothing, food, artwork, paintings, plants, gift sets, knitwear, bookmarks, scrapbooks, personalised bags and notebooks, embroidery frames, home-made gifts for keyrings, pincushions, jewellery boxes.</p> <p>The event generated great interest from the community, especially other local women who expressed an interest in future events. Footfall was highest at the weekend with 500+ attendees and over 2,000 people attended the event in total. 99% of the traders have indicated they would return to a similar event in the future.</p>
<p><b>11.12</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Rebekah Sultana</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member inform me what sort of actions are being taken to support individuals without housing during the winter months and whether the council could be take actions such as lowering the threshold in which Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) protocols can be initiated?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>This year has seen a steep increase in the need for SWEP in London due to lower temperatures.</p> <p>The Greater London Authority (GLA) holds responsibility for activating and deactivating SWEP. SWEP is provided for anyone rough sleeping in the borough during periods of temperatures being zero or below.</p> <p>The Council delivers SWEP through a mixture of commissioned services and partnerships with third sector service providers.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing emergency beds in hostels and day centres</li> <li>• The Street Outreach Team carrying out extra shifts</li> <li>• Mobilised additional capacity by working creatively and collaboratively across the council to deliver 'pop up' facilities and bedspaces in council owned buildings.</li> </ul> <p>These efforts are set to continue during cold weather periods and the further use of council buildings may be deemed necessary. Funding is being sought from central government to support these actions.</p>

		<p>Due to a rise in demand and loss of hostel capacity this year, it is unfortunately not possible to lower the threshold for accessing SWEP without increases in funding for rough sleeping services.</p> <p>The council deploys throughout the year a dedicated Street Outreach Service who identify rough sleepers on the street and work with them to find housing solutions even when SWEP is not activated</p>
<p><b>11.13</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan</b></p>	<p>Community safety is a huge concern, and this is felt quite strongly on the Isle of Dogs. The previous administration did very little to address crime and even less to save the only police station on the Island. Can the Lead Member tell us what he is going to do help Islanders feel safer?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Community Safety Partnership provides the strategic response to crime and antisocial behaviour occurring at a Borough level and at a locality level.</p> <p>Currently the Community Safety Division has:</p> <p>Dedicated council resources allocated to the Isle of dogs to tackle crime and asb, improve feelings of safety, provide reassurance and to work with the police, residents and partners.</p> <p>There is a dedicated team of Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers to patrol the Island, and a dedicated ASB/Community Safety officer to help with problem solving issues and to investigate ASB reports from residents. These officers work as part of a localities team with safer neighbourhoods' police, registered social landlord's residents and third sector partners. Our council officers attend all the local Ward Panel Meetings, and they undertake joint patrols with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team. This includes the use of the Council's outreach and engagement bus and running a series of safer surgeries across the Island. Where there are additional concerns, the council funded police officers, the Partnership Task Force are proactively tasked to the area.</p> <p>To provide a holistic response to issues of youth violence the service works closely in Partnership with organisations such as the Tower Hamlets Island Community Network. Recent work included an anti-robbery initiative focusing on DLR stations with Council officers, youth providers, working alongside British</p>

		<p>Transport Police and local housing providers. Over 275 Hours of additional detached and intensive targeted street-based youth work was delivered to support and protect young people and the wider community.</p> <p>The MPS Estates Strategy is currently under review. There is an ongoing discussion with Police about opportunities for local neighbourhoods' police officers to utilise Council buildings/assets to improve access for residents and visibility of police on the Island.</p>
11.14	<p><b>Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain</b></p>	<p>How many GCSE booster classes have the council supported schools in delivering since 2022?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council does not provide funding for GCSE booster classes. Where schools provide these, they are funded from the school's own budget.</p> <p>In addition, the Department of Education has provided two funding streams to all schools to assist pupils to catch up with their learning in recognition of the impact of the pandemic. One grant is the National Tutoring Programme for schools to access tuition partners and academic mentors, with schools contributing 50% of the costs. The other grant is the Recovery Premium which is used for any activity which enables pupils to catch up on their learning and make expected progress. Both grants can be used to support GSCE preparation.</p>
11.15	<p><b>Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled</b></p>	<p>Now that the independent investigation, initiated by 31 members of staff, into housing management across housing options and homelessness has concluded, can the Lead Member provide an update as to what will happen going forward.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The internal process to deal with the issues raised is ongoing. Senior management continue to meet with staff and trade union representatives to agree appropriate actions, including a review of the staffing structure and service delivery.</p>
11.16	<p><b>Question from Councillor James King</b></p>	<p>When is the council going to get round to fixing the front door of Padstow House on the Roche estate? It has been hanging off its hinges for six months.</p> <p><b>Response</b></p>

		<p>Our Door Entry contractor ABCA attended on 12 January 2024 to make safe. They have raised a follow on order to carry out further repairs and have scheduled an appointment to return on 23 January 2024.</p>
11.17	<p><b>Question from Councillor Abdul Mailk</b></p>	<p>Can the Lead Member provide a list of all the road safety and traffic management schemes on the Isle of Dogs delivered under the current Mayor and measures that are planned in the next 12 months?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>In the last 12 months the Transportation and Highways team has implemented the following schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New zebra crossing on Marsh Wall outside Novotel Hotel</li> <li>• New zebra crossing on Marsh Wall, west of junction with Mastmaker Road</li> <li>• Making permanent with amending timings an experimental school street at Arnhem Wharf School and Harbinger School.</li> <li>• In the next 12 months the following schemes are planned</li> <li>• New Zebra crossing on East Ferry Road adjacent to Canary Wharf College</li> <li>• New traffic calming measures on Casilla Rd &amp; Millharbour</li> <li>• New zebra crossing on Marsh Wall</li> </ul>
11.18	<p><b>Question from Councillor Amina Ali</b></p>	<p>What actions has the council taken to support residents and business owners affected by the recent flooding on Fish Island?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>During the 2 days after the flooding, the Economic Growth Team directly contacted all of the businesses affected to determine their position and immediate needs. Understandably, businesses were still working out exactly what damage had been caused and what the potential costs of reparation might be. The reparation cost estimates ranged from £1,500 to £35,000 at the time of speaking to the businesses.</p> <p>Details of the Government grant schemes accessible to businesses affected by flooding have been shared with all businesses. In summary:</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flooded households in eligible affected areas, who can apply for up to £500 cash to help with immediate costs.</li> <li>2. Households and businesses significantly affected, who will be eligible for 100% council tax and business rates relief for at least 3 months.</li> <li>3. Small-to-medium sized businesses in eligible affected areas, who can apply for up to £2,500 from the Business Recovery Grant to help them return quickly to business as usual.</li> <li>4. Eligible flood-hit property owners, who can apply for up to £5,000 to help make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding via the Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme.</li> <li>5. Farmers who have suffered uninsurable damage to their land will be able to apply for grants of up to £25,000 through the Farming Recovery Fund towards repair and reinstatement costs for farmers adversely affected by exceptional flooding.</li> </ol> <p>Officers from the Business Rates and Economic Growth Teams will support businesses to apply to these schemes: Government payments for communities affected by flooding.</p> <p>Since this time, the Economic Growth Team have been speaking with the Canals and Rivers Trust to clarify issues around liability and insurance position. This work is currently ongoing.</p>
<p><b>11.19</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Bellal Uddin</b></p>	<p>The previous administration had very little regard for Cubitt Town Library. This historic building has received a boost from Mayor Rahman and is now also operating as a much-needed Resident Hub. Is the Lead Member aware of plans to move the library service and if so, will he work to keep the provision in Cubitt Town?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>There are no plans for the immediate future to move the library or services. We are working closely with service users to expand and develop the resident hub model being delivered from Cubitt Town Library.</p> <p>There are plans to develop an Idea Store at Crossharbour site at which point we would stop using Cubitt Town as a library but would like to retain the historic building for other community purposes.</p>

11.20	<b>Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah</b>	<p>Can the Mayor give us an update on progress with Mulberry Academy London Dock?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council led construction of the new secondary school at London Dock, to be run by the Mulberry Academy Trust, remains on schedule for completion by late July 2024. It will therefore be ready to receive its first Year 7 intake in September 2024.</p> <p>Applications for admission to the new school are being administered through the council's co-ordinated arrangements, with parents of successful candidates to be notified on the 1st March 2024.</p>
11.21	<b>Question from Councillor Amy Lee</b>	<p>Can the Mayor tell me what representations he has made to relevant partners in regards to the boat the Ocean Diva?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>This matter was discussed with the Deputy Mayor and other ward Councillors on the Isle of Dogs when the original application was made. The Council's Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service submitted representations to Newham Council against the licence application in relation to noise concerns. The application was subsequently withdrawn by Ocean Diva and currently has not been resubmitted. We currently understand that the current proposals are not to have an embarkation or disembarkation point within Tower Hamlets. This matter is kept under review with Newham Council, who are the responsible authority for issuing relevant licences.</p>
11.22	<b>Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar</b>	<p>How many £100 free school vouchers were delivered to parents over the Christmas period?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council will be distributing vouchers to households with benefits related eligibility for free school meals as well as some additional households identified by schools. However, these were not distributed at Christmas.</p> <p>Due to the timing of additional payments from central government, it was decided that households would be better served by receiving additional funding between those two payments, timed for November and March.</p>

		<p>The tackling poverty team is currently liaising with schools to finalise numbers – expected to be in the region of 20,000 children – and will be sending vouchers to schools once all numbers have been returned.</p>
11.23	<p><b>Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member inform me how many times the housing emergency task force has met and its membership?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Given the extent of the challenges facing our residents and indeed, in cities across the country like London – it was agreed that a range of officer-led individual task and finish groups would be set up, providing a better and more targeted focus on specific housing issues for residents.</p> <p>Progress is routinely reported back to the Lead Member and to the Mayor, in order for them to provide a steer through 1-1 and portfolio meetings.</p> <p>The working groups which have been instigated include damp and mould, overcrowding, preparation for the enactment of the Social Housing Regulation Act, the insourcing of Tower Hamlets Homes and the establishment of resident engagement working groups, preparation for the operational impact of the draft Renters Reform Bill and a group which focuses on the transformation of the Housing Options Service.</p> <p>Additionally, there are regular Housing Away Days, held with senior officers, the Mayor and Lead Member which focus specifically on maximising the supply of affordable housing.</p>
11.24	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam</b></p>	<p>How many housing enforcement officers have been funded and resourced since 2022?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>We have employed two additional permanent enforcement Officers this year funded from the general revenue account. In addition we have 16 additional Officers funded through the current Housing Licensing schemes.</p>

<p><b>11.25</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sabina Khan</b></p>	<p>Could the relevant cabinet member provide an update on any actions taken by the tension monitoring group over the last three months?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Tension Monitoring Group (“TMG”) is a community led, council facilitated group established to monitor and address community tensions. Since the commencement of hostilities in the middle east on the 7th October, eight Tension Monitoring Group (TMG) meetings have been convened.</p> <p>The following activity has taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A joint TMG, and Council statement has been issued reinforcing the message that Tower Hamlets “stands together” and is not a place for hate, prejudice, or intolerance.</li> <li>• The TMG has proactively monitored incidents, social media activity and community concerns emerging from the conflict. This has included such issues as reported hate crime, graffiti, posters and the display of flags. This dialogue has enabled us to assess and report changes in community tensions in a systematic manner to the corporate leadership team.</li> <li>• Information provided by the TMG concerning protests being held in and outside the borough have enabled responses. The council and police have provided a uniformed reassuring presence at key locations e.g., faith centres, parks, and offices of political parties.</li> <li>• In the early stages of the conflict, a WhatsApp group was created for TMG members to provide updates on emerging incidents and for the Council to share actions being undertaken in live time. This was a useful tool to build confidence in the community that the council and its partners were addressing concerns as they arose.</li> <li>• The TMG membership has provided feedback and guidance for the Education Service and other partners to ensure young people are able to debate, discuss, protest, and express their views in a safe, legal and appropriate manner.</li> </ul>
---------------------	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Terms of Reference of the TMG are subject to review to incorporate learning and feedback from members after this sustained period of activity.</li> </ul>
11.26	<b>Question from Councillor Nathalie Bienfait</b>	<p>How much progress has been made on installing new EV chargers across the borough?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please provide details of chargers installed in the last 12 months broken down by ward.</li> <li>Please provide details of plans to install chargers in the coming 12 months</li> <li>In both cases above, please provide the following information: about where and when chargers will be/were installed, what type of charger (e.g. fast/slow), where they are located on the pavement or street and whether/what proportion have a dedicated parking bay for them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>No new EV chargers have been installed in the last 12 months. Officers are bidding for external funding and procuring three new contracts to deliver approximately 2500 EV charging points over the next 3 years.</p> <p>There is a report going to cabinet on 31st Jan 2024, the delivery of EV is subject to cabinet approval.</p> <p>The plan for the next 12 months will depend on the terms of the new contracts, so we cannot confirm specifics at this time.</p> <p>Following a survey of the Borough, Officers have found 3000 potential slow charging point locations, resulting in 2000 being implemented as part of this project phase. In addition to this, 140 fast and 35 rapid charging point locations have been identified. However, these locations still need to be fully confirmed and amended following the required implementation systems, for example, the planning permission process. The current list is available upon request.</p>
11.27	<b>Question from Councillor Peter Golds</b>	<p>Pavements across the Isle of Dogs and elsewhere in the borough are increasingly being obstructed by abandoned lime bikes. These are a particular hazard to the disabled, those with sight impediments and parents with buggies. Many local authorities across London are introducing restrictions on these bikes to prevent the problems they create. Will Tower Hamlets consider implementing such restrictions?</p>

		<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Unfortunately, the ability to carry out enforcement against dockless operators, including Lime, is extremely limited due a lack of specific legislation in place governing their use. Whilst the Department for Transport have indicated that legislation will be introduced it is currently unclear whether this will take place before the forthcoming general election. At a London level, TfL in partnership with London Councils and individual boroughs is seeking to procure a joint contract for both e scooters and dockless bikes which will set out standards for operators to adhere to. Currently it is anticipated that this will be in place for Summer 2025. In the meantime, officers liaise on an ongoing basis with Lime, raising issues on where their bikes are causing an obstruction. If there are any particular hotspot areas these can be raised too, or also passed on directly to Lime by residents and councillors by contacting <a href="mailto:london-ops@li.me">london-ops@li.me</a></p>
--	--	--