

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 21ST JUNE, 2006

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

**REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF
DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL
AND ENGAGEMENT**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Set out overleaf are details of the questions submitted by Members of the Council for response by Members of the Executive. Responses of Lead Members to the questions submitted will be tabled at the Council meeting on Wednesday 21st June, 2006.
- 1.2 Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted.
- 1.3 Oral responses are time limited to two minutes. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to two minutes each.
- 1.4 There is a time limit of thirty minutes for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any question not dealt within this time will be dealt with by way of written responses. The Mayor will decide the time allocated to each question.
- 1.5 Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

2. QUESTIONS

Set out overleaf are the questions which have been received.

2.1 Question from Councillor Alex Heslop to Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation & Community Partnerships

“Would the Leader/Lead Member for Regeneration state what action the Council is currently taking to get a new supermarket into the vacant Safeways store on Roman Road? Would the Leader/Lead Member for Regeneration also indicate what action the Council is taking to regenerate the Roman Road Market?”

2.2 Question from Councillor Rania Khan to Councillor Sirajul Islam, Deputy Leader

“The Mayor of London has committed the GLA to becoming a Living Wage employer, as have Barclays and HSBC banks, KPMG and Queen Mary's College. What measures has the Council taken to ensure that its own employees and those employed by contractors providing services for the Council, are earning at least £7.05 an hour? Can officers prepare a detailed statement of the rates of pay of staff on contract to the Council (including street and office cleaners; home helps etc.), numbers of staff involved and the likely cost of implementing the Mayor's Living Wage by April 2007 across the whole contract chain of the Council?”

2.3 Question from Councillor Simon Rouse to Councillor Denise Jones, Leader of the Council

“Can the Leader of the Council outline her vision for the Council for the next four years and what she believes will be the key performance criteria by which the Council's performance should be judged in the next 12 months?”

2.4 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to Councillor Abdul Asad, Lead Member for Older People and Health

“Health and social care are closely related, and a financial crisis on one side will have an impact on the other. Given that the NHS deficit has more than doubled in the past year to £512 million, and all London Primary Care Trusts in balance are expected to contribute to a reduction of the London NHS deficit, what will be the impact on Council social services of the reduction in local health service budgets?”

2.5 Question from Councillor Marc Francis to Councillor Helal Abbas, Lead Member for Children's Services

“To ask the Lead Member for children & young people, what steps the council is taking to strengthen youth services in Bow?”

2.6 Question from Councillor Ahmed Hussain to Councillor Helal Abbas, Lead Member for Children's Services

"The recent tensions between youth gangs at St Pauls Way School, and the subsequent serving of ASBOs on four young men, raise serious questions about the poor provision of youth services in my ward, and throughout the borough.

When and where are youth services available in Mile End East?.

What is the nature of these youth services and the facilities they provide?

How often they are available?.

Who provides them, how they are publicised and who has access to them?

What after-school activities are available at St Paul's Way school and what plans are in place, from what date, for extending these?"

2.7 Question from Councillor Shirley Houghton to Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener

"In the light of the figures for 2005/2006 that show Tower Hamlets produced 3,588 tonnes of waste more than was forecast, while recycling 4,511 tonnes less than was forecast, will the lead member outline his plans for an emergency response and strategy to tackle the recycling crisis that, based on these figures, will result in the Borough's 2008/2009 recycling target being reached in 2092?"

2.8 Question from Councillor Tim O'Flaherty to Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships

"The Local Government Association Report *Closer to People and Places* published on May 22, 2006, and backed by the Leaders of all the political parties in local government, put forward proposals to enhance the role of local Councillors and put them at the heart of improving people's lives and the places they live. Does the Lead Member endorse this report and will he ensure that its key proposals are implemented?"

2.9 Question from Councillor Carli Harper Penman to Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener

“There are a number of taxi repair centres in the Borough, and particularly in the ward of Bethnal Green South. Whilst these centres provide jobs and are important to our local economy, they can also cause nuisance to local people. In a number of areas including (but not limited to) Cudworth St, Tapp St, Three Colts Lane and Birkbeck Street it is clear that garages are using the public highway as an extension of their workshop space; causing noise, traffic congestion and in some cases a danger to the public. Additionally, residents in the vicinity of the streets mentioned have raised the issues of illegal parking, dumping of spare parts, the abandonment of scrap vehicles and the leaking of oil, grease and diesel onto the pavement and road areas. What action can be taken to resolve this situation?”

2.10 Question from Councillor Lutfa Begum to Councillor Sirajul Islam, Deputy Leader

“Is the Council aware of the number of residents serving with the British or US army in Iraq, how many residents have been injured, or have refused to serve in this or other current theatres of military action? What if any action is being taken to support local residents and families directly involved or affected?”

2.11 Question from Councillor Phil Briscoe to Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer

"As the Council Action Plan and Performance Indicators make no reference to Police response times in the Borough, nor to the ease with which a crime can be reported by a member of the public, can the Lead Member set out his proposals for working with the Police to tackle the barriers (of time, distance, availability and perception) that cause many crimes in this Borough to go unreported?"

2.12 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed to Councillor Rupert Bawden, Lead Member for Housing and Development

“What is the Council’s position with respect to consultation with the traveller community living at Eleanor Street E3 about the proposed compulsory acquisition of this site by crossrail?”

2.13 Question from Councillor Ahmed Omer to Councillor Abdul Asad, Lead Member for Older People and Health

“Please could the Lead Member inform the council of any decisions relating to the Future of the day centre at Mayfield House and on any further plans with regards to Adult Services provision for the Somali community?”

2.14 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman to Councillor Josh Peck, Lead Member for Performance and Resources

“How long has Dame Colet House been closed, is the Council incurring any costs as a result of the closure and what strategy does the Council have for the early re-opening of Dame Colet House?”

2.15 Question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt to Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation & Community Partnerships

“Could the Lead Member outline the following in relation to the Millennium Quarter Strategic Plan on the Isle of Dogs:

- How much the plan cost to produce when it was first put together?
- What the Council’s current view of the plan is in terms of its strategic importance and sustainability?
- How the plan has been maintained and in particular public engagement in relation to any changes of zoning balance?”

2.16 Question from Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan to Councillor Josh Peck, Lead Member for Resources and Performance

“What is the current position with respect to the work of the Budget Scrutiny Group and, in particular, the results of the evaluation of the consultation process for the 2005/6 budget?”

2.17 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun to Councillor Lutfur Rahman, Lead Member for Culture

“Please would the Lead Member provide an update to the Council on the Crisp Street Idea Store and the Idea Store Programme as a whole and in particular provide information on how the usage and levels of customer satisfaction with these facilities compares with their predecessors?”

2.18 **Question from Councillor Waisul Islam to Councillor Josh Peck, Lead Member for Performance and Resources**

“As money that belongs to and should be used to improve council homes and estates has been siphoned off to subsidise other projects in Tower Hamlets, can you give a breakdown of how much of the housing usable capital receipt and any other funds which were available for improving council housing, has been diverted to fund the Rich Mix Centre, showing funds diverted each financial year since 1996”.

2.19 **Question from Councillor Tim Archer to Councillor Rupert Bawden, Lead Member for Development & Housing**

“Can the Lead Member for Housing outline how much money is collected from Leaseholders towards the costs of local dog wardens? Can the Lead member also outline the total costs to the borough of dog warden facilities to the whole of Tower Hamlets and also for Tower Hamlets Council Housing Estates?”

2.20 **Question from Councillor Abdul Matin to Councillor Anwara Ali, Lead Member for Equalities, Employment and Skills**

“Could the Lead Member provide an indication as to when the Equalities Impact Assessments for year 3, 2004/2005 will be published on the Council’s website and can she give an assurance that the recommendations of reports published in years 1 and 2 have all been implemented?”

2.21 **Question from Councillor Clair Hawkins to Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener**

“What is the expected impact of the proposed Drinking Control Zone in the Museum Gardens vicinity and what other measures are being taken to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in this area?”

2.22 Question from Councillor Shahed Ali to Councillor Asad, Lead Member for Health and Older People

“Councillor Asad stated on national television during the 2006 May council election campaign that the sale of Cheviot House, agreed by cabinet on 6th April 2006 was ONLY agreed in principle, but would not go ahead without further consultation with the community. He defined this consultation to consist of some of the following measures:

- (a) Carry out extensive consultation with the local community, particularly with the local residents.
- (b) Carry out consultation with Mulberry School for Girls inclusive of the staff and School Governors.
- (c) Carry out consultation with local TRAs and voluntary community organisations.
- (d) Carry out consultation with local religious groups and places of worship.
- (e) Confirm the relocation of the one-stop-shop to ensure it is easily accessible by residents of this area.

Would the Council and Councillor Asad confirm to this council, the above statements made to the electorate and that the cabinet decision of 6th April 2006 should not go ahead if findings of the above consultation are overwhelmingly against the disposal to East Homes Ltd for a proposed foyer scheme at Cheviot House?”

2.23 Question from Councillor Emma Jones to Councillor Josh Peck, Leader Member for Performance and Resources

“Can the Lead Member for Resources please outline the major benefits of the Council Accommodation strategy?”

2.24 **Question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury to Councillor Rupert Bawden, Lead Member for Housing and Development**

“Would the Lead Member please update the Council on the status of the Housing Choice Process as it relates to the Ocean Estate and Sanctuary Housing and the proposed timescale for the completion of the ballot process in this area ?”

2.25 **Question from Councillor Lutfa Begum to Councillor Anwara Ali, Lead Member for Employment, Equalities and Skills**

“In light of the business development at Canary Wharf and the city fringe, what factors lead to the very low employment rate in Tower Hamlets, affecting men and women? What action is the Council proposing, and asking government to take, to address this?”