

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT 7.45 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 16 MAY 2012

**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Helal Abbas	Councillor Anwar Khan
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Rofique U Ahmed	Councillor Md. Maium Miah
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Tim Archer	Councillor Fozol Miah
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Mohammed Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Craig Aston	Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer
Councillor Lutfu Begum	Councillor Lesley Pavitt
Councillor Mizan Chaudhury	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Zara Davis	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Judith Gardiner	Councillor David Snowdon
Councillor Carlo Gibbs	Councillor Gloria Thienel
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Carli Harper-Penman	Councillor Kosru Uddin
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Ann Jackson	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Councillor Denise Jones	Councillor Amy Whitelock

The meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Rajib Ahmed, in the Chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members declared interests in items included on the agenda for the meeting as follows:-

Councillor	Item	Type of interest	Reason
Cllr Helal Abbas	12.1	Personal	I am a Ward Member in the area/matter to which the motion relates.
Cllr Helal Abbas	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter; and I am a Board Member of Tower Hamlets Community Housing
Cllr Kabir Ahmed	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Khales U Ahmed	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Khales U Ahmed	12.1	Personal	I am a member of the Licensing Committee.
Cllr Khales U Ahmed	12.7	Personal	I am a Ward Member for the organisation providing youth services.
Cllr Ohid Ahmed	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Ohid Ahmed	9.1	Personal	I am a supporter of the campaign against a waste development station in Ailsa Street.
Cllr Rajib Ahmed	9.1	Personal	I am a supporter of the campaign against a waste development station in Ailsa Street.
Cllr Rofique Ahmed	9.4	Personal	I currently have a pension with LGPS.
Cllr Abdul Asad	9.3 & 12.7	Prejudicial	I am employed by youth service providers.
Cllr Abdul Asad	9.4	Personal	I currently have a pension with LGPS.
Cllr Mizan Chaudhury	12.1	Personal	I am a member of the Licensing Committee.
Cllr Alibor Choudhury	12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Stephanie Eaton	6.3	Personal	I am a leaseholder in the area of the Island Homes Housing Association.
Cllr David Edgar	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter

Cllr David Edgar	9.4	Personal	I have a pension with LGPS
Cllr Marc Francis	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter and am a Board member of Old Ford Housing Association.
Cllr Carlo Gibbs	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter and am a Board member of Tower Hamlets Community Housing.
Cllr Carlo Gibbs	12.1	Personal	I help to administer Challenge 25 and Community Alcohol Partnerships in my role at the WSTA.
Cllr Shafiqul Haque	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Shafiqul Haque	9.4	Personal	I have a pension with LGPS
Cllr Carli Harper-Penman	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter and am Director of Communications & Affairs for a regional housing provider.
Cllr Sirajul Islam	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter and am a Council tenant.
Cllr Sirajul Islam	12.9	Personal	I am a Board member of Tower Hamlets Community Housing.
Cllr Ann Jackson	5.1	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Denise Jones	5.3	Personal	I am a School Governor of Mulberry Girls School.
Cllr Denise Jones	9.2	Personal	I am a Director of Eastside Books Ltd
Cllr Rabina Khan	5.3	Personal	I am a Ward Member in the area/matter to which the question relates; and a governor of Mulberry School
Cllr Rabina Khan	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Rania Khan	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter

Cllr Shiria Khatun	9.1	Personal	I am a supporter of the campaign against a waste development station in Ailsa Street.
Cllr Fozol Miah	12.1	Personal	Ward Councillor
Cllr Md. Abdul Mukit	12.9	Personal	Board Member, Registered Social Landlord
Cllr Lesley Pavitt	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr Joshua Peck	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter
Cllr John Pierce	12.8	Personal	I work for the National Housing Federation which is the trade body for housing associations in England.
Cllr Oliur Rahman	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter.
Cllr Oliur Rahman	9.2 & 12.11	Personal	I am employed in the Employment Service.
Cllr Rachael Saunders	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter and am a THH leaseholder.
Cllr Gloria Thienal	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I am an RSL leaseholder
Cllr Bill Turner	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter.
Cllr Bill Turner	9.4	Personal	I have a pension with LGPS
Cllr Bill Turner	12.1	Personal	I am a member of the Licensing Committee.
Cllr Helal Uddin	12.7	Personal	I work for a youth service provider
Cllr Kosru Uddin	12.1	Personal	I work for the Department of Work & Pensions.
Cllr Motin Uz-Zaman	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter; and Board Member, Tower Hamlets Community Housing.
Cllr Amy Whitelock	5.1 & 12.9	Personal	I have signed the Residents Charter.
Cllr Amy Whitelock	12.14	Personal	I am an employee of Mind, one of the organisations which runs the Time to Change campaign.

RESOLVED

1. That the declarations of interests made be noted; and

2. That the Monitoring Officer issue guidance in due course on changes to the rules regarding registration and declaration of interests by Members, pursuant to the Localism Act 2011.

3. MINUTES

Members raised a number of queries regarding the content of the draft minutes. In particular (i) Members felt that the minutes should more clearly record that the Mayor did not provide oral answers to Members' Questions at the 25th January meeting and that the written answers included were provided subsequently; (ii) Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman stated that in reply to his question, on a matter of importance to the borough, the Mayor had stated that Councillor Uz-Zaman was 'only a councillor'; and (iii) Councillor Joshua Peck stated that the minutes did not accurately record the points of order and related Member comments that followed the public question from Ms Catherine Tuitt, despite the Council having agreed that these would be included.

The Service Head, Democratic Services reminded Members that the minutes were not intended to be a verbatim record of the discussion, but primarily a record of the motions and amendments proposed and seconded at the meeting and the decisions taken. Nevertheless the draft minutes would be amended to address the points raised above.

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 25th January 2012 and the Budget Meeting of the Council held on 22nd February 2012 be not agreed but be referred for consideration to the next meeting of the Council, amended to incorporate matters raised by Members.

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

No announcements were made at the meeting.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition from Tower Hamlets Federation of TRAs regarding a Residents Charter

Mr Phil Sedler addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members.

Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing, then responded to the issues raised. Councillor Khan stated that she met regularly with TRA representatives in view of regular criticisms regarding social landlords, so as

to find out how the Mayor and his administration might best give support. She was proud that the Borough was at the forefront of social housing provision and delighted to see tenants and residents living in social housing coming together and spelling out, in the Residents Charter, the basic standards that social landlords should uphold.

Although the Council had no direct control over Registered Providers, it could exercise influence through partnership arrangements, and Councillor Khan was committed to keeping tenants and residents at the heart of Council housing policy, and to resisting the Government's reforms to rents and tenancies that would alter the hard-won rights of social housing tenants.

RESOLVED

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

Procedural Motion

At this point, Councillor Rania Khan moved, and Councillor Alibor Choudhury seconded, a procedural motion – "That under Procedural Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow motion 12.9 to be considered as next business."

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

5.2 Petition from Messrs Glyn Robbins, Guy Shennan and others regarding Veolia

Mr Guy Shennan addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members.

Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment, welcomed the petition and responded to the issues raised. Councillor Ali commented that he shared the petitioners' concerns about the Israeli military occupation Palestinian territories. It was in that spirit that he and his colleagues fully supported the Council motion passed in February 2011, criticising Veolia's involvement in illegal Israeli settlements in the Palestinian West Bank.

Councillor Shahed Ali indicated that the Mayor had acted on that motion and had met senior Veolia officers who had given assurances that Veolia was in the process of divesting itself of all business interests in the area. Councillor Ali added that he would be happy to meet representatives of the campaign to discuss the current situation and their concerns.

RESOLVED

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

5.3 Petition from residents of Hainton Close regarding activities of a disruptive nature at Mulberry School for Girls

Mr Ralph Candlish, representing the residents of Hainton Close, addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mr Candlish stated that since the petition was raised, there had been some response from Parkwood Leisure, the PFI contractor. However, there were still three important issues that had not so far been addressed:- rogue balls, levels of noise and intrusive lights.

Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, responded to the petition. He stated that officers had already written to the petitioners addressing their concerns and that local residents had been in discussions with investigating officers from the antisocial behaviour team. The facilities of the school were managed by the PFI contractor, which included the arrangements for out of hours use of such facilities and officers had made strong representations to the contractors on the matters raised. Councillor Rahman stated that he was aware of how upsetting noise and other disruptions could be and he was committed to ensuring that controls were put in place.

RESOLVED

That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Children, Schools and Families for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**6.1 Question from Mr Brian Nicholson, Secretary, London Dockers Athletic & Social Club**

At the last Council meeting Tower Hamlets was described as a grotty borough. Can the Mayor tell us what he is doing about street cleansing and public realm improvements across the borough?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

Thank you for your question. I am pleased to announce that in the past 12 months we have improved the cleansing of our streets to the highest levels it has ever been.

We have also introduced two 'Find it Fix it' teams to proactively resolve environmental issues by reacting to littering hot spots that may occur irregularly across the borough.

We have also introduced the new dog fouling cleansing service and purchased 500 new litter bins of which there will be an increase of 300 by this year.

In addition we have piloted the removal of all the trade waste bins which used to block our pavements from our busiest roads by replacing them with time banded sack collections. This pilot scheme was so successful that we have rolled out the programme across the borough and improved the look and feel of our streets

Finally, a number of educational and promotional activities are also undertaken to dissuade people from littering.

All of this has led to a huge improvement in our public realm and demonstrates the Mayor's electoral pledge to make the borough cleaner and safer.

(No supplementary question was put)

6.2 Question from Mr Paplu Kaledur

Can the Mayor update this meeting how many young people from Tower Hamlets have received the Education Maintenance Awards since its inception, and does he believe the Government is supporting young people with its current policy on EMA?'

Response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Thank you for your question. So far 1,600 students have applied for the Mayor's Education Award which we introduced to plug the funding gap left by the termination by the Government of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). 700 students have received a payment and more payments will be made.

This shows that our students need all the support they can get.

The EMA scheme had a positive impact on our students in Tower Hamlets and the Mayor's Education Award is designed to keep those dreams alive. This Award will ensure that poverty will not hold back our young people's ambitions.

Finally, no, I don't think the government is supporting young people with the abolition of EMA across the country.

(No supplementary question was put)

6.3 Question from Mr Aminur Rahman

How will the Mayor ensure that residents' rights will be protected with the intended merger of Island Homes and One Housing?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

Thank you for your question. We have taken a very proactive approach to managing this transition.

Officers have been meeting regularly with senior staff in One Housing. At these meetings officers have raised concerns that both the Council and residents have about the merger.

A detailed action plan has been developed to manage these concerns and we will be keeping a close eye on this to ensure residents concerns are addressed during this transition.

(No supplementary question was put)

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council meeting, adding his congratulations to the newly-appointed Speaker and his appreciation for the work of the outgoing Speaker. He further expressed congratulations to the two new Councillors, with hopes that they would enjoy their terms of office.

The Mayor commented that the economic crisis continued to create fear and hardship across Europe and that the position could get much worse before any improvement. Elected Members needed to work together to help the community in these times and the phrase as stated by the Prime Minister that "we are all in it together" should focus politicians in clearing up the mess that governments had created.

Residents in this Borough faced particularly difficult times and were relying on Councillors to deliver the means for creating jobs. Over 1500 jobs had been secured arising from the Olympic Games, which had produced fantastic opportunities for the Borough. As many residents as possible should be helped to feel they were part of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion, and tickets had been purchased with money recovered from the proceeds of crime to help them attend Olympic events.

The Borough also had strong connections with the imminent Queen's Jubilee. Queen Victoria had opened Victoria park in 1849 and the Mayor, with colleagues, had opened important improvement works there over the last week.

The Mayor concluded by stating that the future involved making many difficult decisions and all Members should work together for the benefit of residents.

The Leader of the Majority Group and Leaders of the Minority Groups each responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The Service Head, Democratic Services, referred to points made earlier by Members with regard to the Mayor's responses to questions and indicated that the Mayor's Scheme of Delegation notified to the Annual Council Meeting earlier that evening allowed the Mayor to delegate responsibility for replies to Cabinet members where these fell within their delegated portfolios.

The questions below and in each case (except where indicated) a supplementary question were put and were answered by the relevant Executive Member.

8.1 Question from Councillor Carli Harper-Penman:

Following the recent announcement by the Ministry of Defence that a high velocity missile system is to be located within the Bow Quarter, can the Mayor update Council about the discussions that have taken place with the MoD and the steps that he will be taking to ensure that residents of Tower Hamlets are not endangered or unduly inconvenienced by the presence of such a system?

Response by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

The Ministry of Defence did provide a verbal briefing to the Acting Chief Executive that confirmed that they were considering the possibility of installing missiles in the borough along with several other boroughs. This information was provided under strict secrecy.

The Acting Chief Executive expressed concern directly to the MoD that it should do all it can to minimise risk to local people.

However the Council has no powers to prevent the installation of these weapons in our borough.

Clearly having armed ordnance in a residential area, however well managed, must raise concerns with the immediate local population. We will vigorously support local residents in making representations to Government and to the MoD and by raising directly their concerns where we can.

Ward councillors formed part of the discussions on this issue.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Carli Harper-Penman

Poor communications around this whole issue has created worries for residents. At a meeting with the Interim Chief Executive I was informed that the MoD would write to residents apologising for the way in which the matter had been handled. Do you agree it is unacceptable that no such letter has yet been issued to residents?

Summary of response to the supplementary question

Yes, a letter has already been sent to the MoD in those terms.

8.2 Question from Councillor David Snowdon:

Will the Mayor urge Social Landlords in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to publish all their spending over £500, in line with Viridian and Home Group's example?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

The Mayor and I absolutely agree that Social Landlords should publish their spending over £500.

However we don't think this call for transparency goes far enough.

I was interested to read last week George Monbiot's article demanding that freedom of information laws should be extended to the private sector. The national government is pushing forward an agenda which involves the greater involvement of the private sector in public service delivery. We are all realising the drastic impact the Health and Social Care Bill will have on the NHS and the financial benefits that will be reaped for large companies.

We often talk in politics that rights come with responsibilities. Well, it is only right that the privileged access to public contracts comes with greater responsibility in terms of scrutiny.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor David Snowdon

Social Landlords should be bound by the same rules as local councils. Can I have an undertaking that Social Landlords will only be used as Preferred Development Partners if they sign up to the same degree of transparency that applies to this Council?

Summary of response to supplementary question

Yes, the Mayor and I agree that Social Landlords should publish details of items of expenditure of more than £500.

8.3 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun:

Can the Mayor explain what he has done regarding his proposed charges for bulk rubbish collection & rat control?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

We as a Council have agreed that a £15 charge is introduced for bulk waste collections in 2012/13.

In order to minimise any adverse impact of this proposal to vulnerable residents within the borough, two free collections per year will be offered to those in receipt of Housing Benefit.

It has never been our intention to introduce charges for rat treatment in the current financial year. It is proposed to introduce charges from April 2013, although most social housing tenants will continue to receive free treatment since their landlords have block treatment agreements with the Council.

(No supplementary question was put)

8.4 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah:

Would the Mayor join with me in congratulating the former MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, George Galloway, on his landslide victory in the Bradford West by-election and would he agree with me that this extraordinary election result, gained in one of the shortest by-election campaigns ever as a result of the choice of the Labour Party, shows enormous dissatisfaction with the old established parties and a desire for change, a desire expressed in Tower Hamlets in the election of an independent mayor for Tower Hamlets and the election of Respect and an independent councillor in successive by-elections in the Spitalfields and Banglatown ward?

Response by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

I think this and the recent local election results, and the fact that Ed Miliband is riding high in the polls, reflect to different degrees increasing frustration among the voters about the impact of austerity.

The more anti-austerity voices we have in parliament and local councils the better.

Unfortunately, another expression of the current climate is a cynicism about politics.

It is important that we redouble our efforts to re-engage people that are disaffected from the democratic process.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Fozol Miah

It is a matter of regret that the Labour candidate Ken Livingstone failed narrowly in his bid to become Mayor of London. Does the Mayor share my disappointment that Tower Hamlets Labour Party members decided not to campaign strongly for him?

Summary of response to supplementary question

I agree with you and this was very regrettable. On election day I was surprised to see many Labour councillors and activists campaigning only in one ward.

8.5 Question from Councillor Bill Turner:

Will the Mayor outline the numbers of children on roll at the new free schools in the borough who are eligible for free school meals? Do any other organisations with which the Council has an existing relationship in other ways propose to open free schools in the borough, and if so what discussions has the Council had with such organisations. Does he support or oppose any such plans which they may have and does he share the view of the Labour Group that the universal provision of excellent comprehensive education is the best way of ensuring that our children get the education they need?

Response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

The numbers of children enrolled in Free Schools on free school meals is not provided to the local authority but to the Department of Education who will not allow this information to be released to us for publication.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Bill Turner

I accept that the DfE have been less than helpful but given that there are a number of free schools in the borough and it is clear that they are not serving the whole community, may I suggest that you write in strong terms to the DfE asking that the Council should have details of these figures?

Summary of response to supplementary question

I share many of Councillor Turner's views on this matter and have shared a number of phone conversations with him. I will send a letter jointly with the Mayor asking for the information requested. He may be aware that information published on a blog in relation to one of the free schools in the borough suggests that school has just 2% of pupils entitled to free school meals, compared to the borough average of 48%.

8.6 Question from Councillor Peter Golds:

Will the Mayor inform the council when he decided to install speed humps on Jesus Green, E2, and what consultation took place for this particular proposal?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

It is crucial that the young and elderly are free from the fear of traffic accidents.

We have asked officers to investigate the concerns of local residents regarding speeding vehicles in this area.

Based on their assessment of the situation, officers will bring forward recommendations and proposals for local consultation.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Peter Golds

Thank you, but what was happening in this area at the time to cause the Mayor to issue an instruction to officers to install speed humps, or to claim that he did so? When was that instruction given, was it far from 3rd May 2012?

Summary of response to supplementary question

Officers have been asked to investigate concerns raised by local residents and when that investigation is complete, we will be informed of the outcome.

8.7 Question from Councillor Ann Jackson:

Can the Mayor detail how the Council is supporting residents who are affected by the Government's reduction in rent and council tax benefit?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

Thank you for your question. As lead member for housing, the Mayor and I are extremely concerned about the impact the government welfare cuts will have on local residents.

First, I would like to reassure you that this year's budget absorbed the central government cut to Council benefit.

In terms of Welfare Benefit changes, the Mayor and I have taken a lead role in ensuring the Council and partners are prepared for the impact central government changes will have on residents in the borough.

We have developed a partnership approach, drawing in RSLs, advice agencies, THH and all Council directorates. This approach was initiated through the Welfare Reform Congress where many of our partners signed up

to a Welfare Reform Pledge. It is now being furthered by a cross organisation officer group.

Some of the mitigating actions we are proposing include: Using our discretionary housing payments, contacting residents both through letters and home visits, staff briefings, working with advice services and liaising with landlords and others.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Ann Jackson

Has Tower Hamlets been late in starting to deal with this issue and has the Mayor met Ministers yet for discussions?

Summary of response to supplementary question

We have not been late in recognising the issues. It is essential that we have all the relevant information before approaching the Minister.

8.8 Question from Councillor Harun Miah

Would the Mayor agree with me that drug use and dependency constitutes a major threat to the well-being of our young people in Tower Hamlets and would he also agree that there has to be a multi-faceted approach if we are to get on top of this problem, including education, job opportunities for young people as well as the appropriate use of the criminal law and would he outline recent initiatives on this matter?

Response by Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Thank you for your question. I agree that drug use and dependency constitutes a threat to the well-being of our young people and their families in Tower Hamlets.

Our multi-agency approach includes a range of interventions to support young people including education, training and job opportunities.

We have developed a strategy which sets out how we will develop services for young people which will focus on prevention, early intervention, targeted and specialist services.

The provision of education and job opportunities for young people is central to the Mayor's priorities and this administration continues to ensure that young people become well-rounded adults, who are committed to learning and development and contribute to economic prosperity.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Harun Miah

Thank you. In the current economic situation, how long will these measures continue to be provided?

Summary of response to supplementary question

We will continue to monitor budgetary issues but I would assure you that these services will continue to be provided as long as they can be financially accommodated. And we will be looking further at how to give young people support to ensure they become good citizens.

8.9 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders:

On what basis did the Mayor make his decision to close the in house domiciliary homecare service?

Response by Councillor Abdul Asad, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

The decision to change the in-house domiciliary homecare service was decided under this administration and supported by the Labour Group. The Mayor agreed with this plan and put it into my budget in February 2011.

Referrals to the in house service for longer term packages of care were ended in October 2009, and the volume of longer term care provided by the in house service has therefore been reducing since that time.

A lot of work has been going on behind the scenes to ensure good services for our elderly residents. That is why this Council has been awarded for the last six years an excellent service rating and we will continue to improve the quality of our services.

Summary of supplementary question from Councillor Rachael Saunders

It is exactly because our in-house service is award-winning that I appeal to you not to close it. Previously the decision was taken in 2009 to accept no further referrals to the in-house homecare service. Since then, reablement and personalisation have become a reality and since then service users have told us that what some of them want is a reliable in-house service that will be there year on year regardless of changes in contracts. Labour has listened and we now have an explicit policy to maintain a small in-house service. Why will you not listen to those service users?

Summary of response to supplementary question

Thank you. The externalisation policy of domiciliary care was agreed in 2004 under a Labour-controlled Council and since then the Council has been making plans to ensure that residents continue to receive good services. In terms of any individual cases, I would be happy to discuss these outside of this meeting.

Questions 8.10 to 8.22 were not put as the time allowed for this agenda item had expired. Written responses subsequently provided for each question are attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

9.1 Local Development Framework (LDF): Managing Development - Development Plan Document and Fish Island Area Action Plan submission to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal, finalising work on Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which were to form part of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy as adopted in September 2010, and which comprised:

- Managing Development – Development Plan Document (DPD) and
- Fish Island - Area Action Plan (AAP)

Councillor Rabina Khan **MOVED** and Councillor Shafiqul Haque **SECONDED** the recommendations as contained in the report.

Councillor Sirajul Islam requested that all Members of the Council be provided with details of any minor amendments made to the final documents. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this would be done.

After debate, the report recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

1. That the Managing Development DPD and Fish Island AAP be approved as attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report, incorporating the minor amendments detailed at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 of the report, for submission to the Secretary of State in accordance with regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
2. That approval be given to the submission of the documents which support the Managing Development DPD and Fish Island AAP (Appendices 5 to 9) and have been developed in accordance with regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. These are:
 - (a) the Sustainability Appraisal reports;
 - (b) the proposals map;
 - (c) the Statements of Engagement;
 - (d) copies of representations made and the Council's response
 - (e) the Equalities Assessments; and
 - (f) the evidence base.

- 3 That the Corporate Director of Development and Renewal be authorised, after consultation with the Mayor and Lead Member for Housing, to make any appropriate and necessary minor amendments to the Managing Development DPD and Fish Island AAP and their supporting evidence base prior to submission to the Secretary of State.
4. That details of any amendments made under resolution (3) above be provided to all Members.

9.2 Enterprise Strategy

The Council considered the report of the Cabinet at its meeting of 8th February 2012, incorporating the report of the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal, proposing the approval of the Enterprise Strategy for the Borough.

Councillor Shafiqul Haque **MOVED** and Councillor Rania Khan **SECONDED** the recommendations as contained in the report.

After debate, the report recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly, it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Enterprise Strategy be approved as set out in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report (CAB 068/112), attached as Appendix A to the Council report.

9.3 Community Safety Plan 2012/13

The Council considered the report of the Cabinet at its meeting of 4th April 2012, incorporating the report of the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture proposing the adoption of the Borough-wide Community Safety Plan for 2012-13.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **MOVED** and Councillor Alibor Choudhury **SECONDED** the recommendations as contained in the report.

During debate on the matter, Members raised a number of concerns regarding the content of the draft Plan, including:

- The plan includes aspirations and aims but is weak on actual actions to achieve these
- The section on Drugs and Alcohol concentrates almost entirely on drug abuse whereas more harm is often caused by alcohol
- The section on integrated offender management also includes little in the way of concrete actions.
- There needs to be more focus on how offenders can access settled accommodation and employment particularly in current conditions

- Cohesion and Hate Crime: (i) The 'we will' statements at page 244 relate to 2011/12; (ii) bullet points at p.245 inadequately represent councillors' role in community cohesion and leadership, which is not restricted to scrutiny and its role in the budget process
- Youth Offending Team (p.237) – inadequate information included on poor recent inspection.
- Stop & Search – there is not enough information on the negative aspects of this particularly for some parts of the community; and inadequate data on demographic breakdown (e.g. Somali community excluded)
- Not enough detail on the practical plans to address antisocial behaviour during the Olympics period.

Councillor Judith Gardiner **MOVED** an amendment – “That the draft Plan be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for more detailed discussion”. However, the Service Head, Democratic Services, advised the Council that, as the Plan formed part of the Policy Framework, any proposed amendments would have to be notified to the Mayor for his consideration.

No motion was moved to refer the draft Plan back to the Mayor but Councillor Peter Golds **MOVED** and Councillor David Snowdon **SECONDED** an amendment to defer this matter to the proposed Extraordinary Council Meeting to be held in June 2012. On being put to the vote, this amendment was **carried** and accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

That consideration of the draft Community Safety Plan 2012/13 be deferred to the next meeting of the Council in the light of the matters raised by Councillors during the debate.

9.4 Pay Policy

The Council considered the report of the Human Resources Committee of 29th February 2012 proposing the adoption of the Council's Pay Policy Statement.

The Chair of the Human Resources Committee, Councillor Md. Abdul Mukit, MBE, **MOVED** and Councillor Joshua Peck **SECONDED** an amendment to the report as follows:-

“That the Pay Policy Statement be adopted as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Human Resources Committee, subject to the amendment of Section 11.3 (Negotiated Exits – Settlements) to provide that any proposed settlement under that section shall be subject to the agreement of the Human Resources Committee.”

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The substantive recommendations as amended were then put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Pay Policy Statement be adopted as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Human Resources Committee, subject to the amendment of Section 11.3 (Negotiated Exits – Settlements) to provide that any proposed settlement under that section shall be subject to the agreement of the Human Resources Committee.

10. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)

Nil items.

11. OTHER BUSINESS**11.1 Scheme of Members' Allowances 2012/13**

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services proposing the re-adoption of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2012/13.

Councillor Oliur Rahman **MOVED** and Councillor Kabir Ahmed **SECONDED** an amendment regarding the maximum hourly sum payable under the scheme for a Dependent Carer's Allowance as this was below the London Living Wage. Councillor Joshua Peck endorsed the intention behind the amendment but considered that this should be subject to further work as the allowance was intended as a contribution towards costs incurred, not a salary level. He suggested that the Human Resources Committee should be asked to look into the matter and report back. Councillor Oliur Rahman agreed to this suggestion and the Council:-

RESOLVED

1. That the Members' Allowances Scheme at Part 6 of the Constitution be re-adopted for 2012/13, subject to minor amendments to reflect the changes to the Standards regime introduced as a result of the Localism Act 2011; and
2. That accordingly the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Members' Allowances Scheme 2012 be adopted as set out at Appendix 'A' to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services).
3. That the Human Resources Committee be requested to give consideration to the maximum hourly amount payable under the Dependants' Carers Allowance (Section 9 of the report) in view of this Council's commitment to the London Living Wage, and report back.

11.2 The Amended Standards Regime

The Interim Chief Executive indicated that this report had been withdrawn for further consultation with Members and others and consideration at an Extraordinary Council Meeting to be held in June 2012.

11.3 Report on Executive Decisions precluded from 'Call-in' on grounds of urgency

The Council considered a report on decisions taken by the Cabinet on grounds of urgency under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17.1.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Procedural Motion

At the commencement of this agenda item Councillor Alibor Choudhury **MOVED** and Councillor Ohid Ahmed **SECONDED** a procedural motion – “That under procedural Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow agenda item 14 to be considered as next business.”

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

12.1 Motion on Licensing and anti-social behaviour on and around Brick Lane

Councillor Helal Abbas **MOVED** and Councillor Bill Turner **SECONDED** the motion as printed in the agenda.

After debate the motion as printed in the agenda was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- The complaints by many residents who live around Spitalfields that the number of late night alcohol licences on and around Brick Lane is resulting in an unacceptable level of alcohol-related crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour locally, including late night noise, urination and vomiting on doorsteps, and violence.
- The request by police that the Council, as the licensing authority, adopt a saturation policy for the Brick Lane area

- That a draft saturation policy for the Brick Lane area was taken to the Licensing Committee in September 2011, but has progressed no further, awaiting the publication of guidance on Cumulate Impact Policies by the government
- That other measures, as well as the proposed saturation policy, could benefit local residents.

This Council resolves:

- To support a Five Point Plan to tackle the problem that includes:
 - A Saturation Policy for the Brick Lane area being brought forward for the consideration of the Licensing Committee as soon as possible after publication of the awaited government guidance
 - The adoption of Challenge 25 as a mandatory condition on all TH licences to the statement of licensing policy
 - Setting up a "Brick Lane Alcohol Partnership" including the trade, police, council and voluntary or community groups to better co-ordinate action, share information and build working relationships between relevant stakeholders (to be contained within existing budgets)
 - Giving police powers to implement section 30 dispersal orders from 10pm to 5am Thursday – Saturday in the immediate vicinity of Brick Lane, allowing them limited powers to move groups on where they have reasonable grounds
 - Consideration of introducing pop-up/temporary urinals, as used in Westminster, on Friday and Saturday nights, and consulting on a bye-law to increase the fine for public urination to level 2 on the Standard Scale (£500).

[Note from clerk: Proposed revisions to the Licensing Policy Statement must be the subject of consultation under Section 5 (3) of the Licensing Act 2003. In addition, as one of the strategies included in the Council's Policy Framework, revisions to the Licensing Policy Statement must be developed with the involvement of the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, prior to adoption by the Council. Therefore to the extent that the resolution above involves changes to the Licensing Policy, the effect of the resolution is not to change the Policy at this stage, but to call on officers to commence a consultation process on the proposed amendments, for subsequent report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Executive and Council.]

Change to Order of Business

At this point, Councillor Carlo Gibbs **MOVED** and Councillor Bill Turner **SECONDED** a procedural motion – That under Procedural Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow motion 12.4 to be considered as next business.”

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

12.4 Open Spaces Strategy

Councillor Carlo Gibbs **MOVED** and Councillor Amy Whitelock **SECONDED** the motion as printed in the agenda.

After debate, the motion as printed in the agenda was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- The decision of Council on 8 December 2010 that put limits on the use of Victoria Park for commercial events, whilst still recognising that some events should still be allowed
- The decision of Council on 21 December 2011 that Sir John McDougal Gardens, Millwall Park and Island Gardens should not be made available for commercial events.

This Council further notes:

- The decision of the Mayor to ignore the decision of Council
- The Mayor's decision to cancel the free community event Paradise Gardens and the popular annual fireworks event in Victoria Park
- That the Open Spaces Strategy is reserved to Full Council and does not currently contain a section on Commercial Events in the borough's Parks

This Council resolves:

- To amend the Open Spaces Strategy to include a section on Commercial Events in parks, to reflect the prior decisions of Council, that:
- In regards to Victoria Park
 - Limits the number of large commercial music events in the park to six days each year;
 - Prevents the park being used for commercial events on consecutive weekends throughout the summer, with at least two weekends free after a weekend of events;
 - Sets a closing time for events to 10pm;
 - Sets a reduced noise levels for commercial events.

- In regards to Sir John McDougal Gardens, Millwall Park and Island Gardens
 - prevents the holding of commercial events.
- In regards to the gardens at Trinity Square:
 - allow the use for weddings but prevent the holding of other commercial events.
- To exclude the Live Site events in Victoria Park in 2012 from the above.

[Note from clerk: The Open Space Strategy is one of the plans and strategies included in the Council's Policy Framework. Any proposed amendment to the Open Space Strategy must follow the procedure set out in the Council's Constitution for developing the Policy Framework including publication of the proposals by the Executive; inclusion in the Forward Plan of the timescale and arrangements for consultation including with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Therefore to the extent that the above resolution involves changes to the Open Space Strategy, the effect of the resolution is not to amend the Strategy at this stage, but to call on the Mayor to include the amendments proposed in the draft Open Space Strategy for consultation and subsequent report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive and Council.]

Change to Order of Business

At this point, Councillor Rachael Saunders **MOVED** and Councillor Bill Turner **SECONDED** a procedural motion – That under Procedural Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow motion 12.7 to be considered as next business.”

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

12.7 Youth Services

Councillor Rachael Saunders **MOVED** and Councillor Helal Uddin **SECONDED** the motion as printed in the agenda.

After debate, Councillor Alibor Choudhury **MOVED** and Councillor Kabir Ahmed **SECONDED** a procedural motion – “That under Procedural Rule 14.1.10 the question be now put.” The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The motion as printed in the agenda was then put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED**This Council notes:**

- That the executive Mayor has decided to take the Council's youth service contracts in house.
- That the reasons given for this decision included assertions that money would be saved if the council staff rather than the third sector organisations and schools managed the provider contracts.
- That no evidence has been given for this, and no firm numbers given.
- That the decision is not in line with the principles set out in the current Tower Hamlets Children and Young People's Plan.
- That the current providers add significant value to the contracts they hold through supporting services within their own HR and IT and through running additional youth services with their own resources.
- That youth services across Tower Hamlets have improved significantly since they were first contracted out, through effective partnership working.

This Council believes:

- That in tough times it is right to work with partners to seek savings and efficiencies, and wrong to undermine relationships and act unilaterally.
- That the best youth services support educational attainment and equip our young people to lead their communities. Youth services are there to support excellence not just tackle ASB.
- That resources should reflect need, with the greatest resources for areas with the greatest youth population.
- That effective hyper local partnerships have been developed between youth services, schools, health services, employers and others through locally based management of services.
- That currently our young people are able to shape and lead their own services. This must be strengthened, not weakened, in any future model.
- That the targets that the contractors currently report against should continue to be publicly reported against if the service is taken in house.

This Council resolves:

- To oppose bringing the youth service in house at this point.
- To call on the Mayor to:-
 - Work with providers to identify efficiencies in partnership; and
 - Run a full consultation with providers and young people before decisions about the future of the youth service are made.

Change to Order of Business

At this point Councillor Carli Harper-Penman **MOVED** and Councillor Helal Abbas **SECONDED** a procedural motion – “That under Procedural Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow agenda item 13 to be considered as next business, followed by an exempt Emergency Motion to be moved in Part 2, followed by agenda item 14.” The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

Extension of time limit for the meeting

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman **MOVED** and Councillor Bill Turner **SECONDED** a procedural motion – “That under Procedure Rule 15.11.7 the meeting be extended for up to an additional 30 minutes to enable consideration of agenda item 14.” The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

Motions 12.2; 12.3; 12.5; 12.6; 12.8; 12.9; 12.10; 12.11; 12.12; 12.13; 12.14 and 12.15 were not considered due to the time limit for the meeting being reached.

13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted contains information defined as Exempt in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Urgent motion – Recruitment to the post of Chief Executive

The Council agreed to consider an urgent motion that was tabled regarding the above matter.

Councillor Carli Harper-Penman **MOVED** and Councillor Anwar Khan **SECONDED** the tabled motion.

The urgent motion recommended the Council (inter alia) to reaffirm the process agreed by the Human Resources Committee on 18th January 2012 to require a unanimous decision by the Appointments Sub-Committee; to note that no recommendation had been made to the Council by the Sub-Committee; to note the previous officer advice that other options exist; and to ask officers to report back to the June 2012 Extraordinary Council Meeting on options for both recruitment and interim arrangements.

The urgent motion also proposed management arrangements to apply until the June Council meeting, under which the Corporate Management Team would jointly lead the Council, with one officer assuming the role of Head of Paid Service.

Following debate, the urgent motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

14. APPOINTMENT TO THE POST OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE (HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

The Council considered an exempt report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) in relation to the appointment to the post of Chief Executive.

The recommendations in the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) were put to the vote and were **defeated**. Accordingly, it was:-

RESOLVED

That the recommendations in the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) be not agreed.

[Note from clerk: the effect of the above decisions is that no appointment was made at the meeting to the post of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service).

The meeting ended at 11.37 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

APPENDIX A**WRITTEN RESPONSES PROVIDED AFTER THE MEETING TO MEMBERS'
QUESTIONS 8.10 – 8.22****8.10 Question from Councillor Craig Aston:**

Will the Mayor provide an update on the status of the Limehouse Library building and site?

Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources

Limehouse Library was formally declared surplus to Council requirement by Cabinet on 12 January 2011 and officers were given authority to dispose of the property in the open market.

The property was openly and widely marketed by external agents on 9 May 2011.

A range of bids were received on 17 June 2011. All the due process was followed and the highest possible bidder was secured.

However the top bid and a number of other bids were withdrawn and due to the non-performance of the preferred bidder the transaction was aborted by the Council.

The property was re-marketed on 16 January 2012 and best and final bids were received on 24 February 2012.

8.11 Question from Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman:

Can the Mayor inform the Council, if he or a member of his family (including brother) has been involved in collecting Postal Ballots from residents in Spitalfields Ward?

Response by Mayor Lutfur Rahman

The answer is no.

As Mayor, I encourage local people to fully participate in the democratic process and postal voting is one of the ways to express their democratic choice.

The current electoral law facilitates people to vote in one of a number of ways including by post.

8.12 Question from Councillor Kabir Ahmed

Following the judgement by the Local Government Standards in England Tribunal to uphold this Council's Standard Committee decision to suspend the last Leader of the Council; does the Mayor agree with me that the Leader of the Labour Group has done nothing about this? And does he also agree with me that Cllr. Abbas should apologise to restore public faith, and to ensure there is not any abuse of power, bringing the office and the council into disrepute by breaching staff member protocol?

Response by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

I agree that the Labour Group leader has failed to act on this matter.

The Council's constitution clearly stipulates the code of conduct for members of staff and councillors.

An outside independent body had upheld the decision of this Council's Standards Committee to suspend Cllr Abbas.

Rules are there for all of us to follow. It is disappointing that Cllr Abbas has not done the right thing and apologised to the Council and local people.

8.13 Question from Councillor Lesley Pavitt

I would like to ask the Mayor whether in view of the fact that we have a young persons' mayor he has considered having an older persons' mayor as well?

Response by Councillor Abdul Asad, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Thank you for your question. I think there is a real case for an Older Person's Mayor or Champion and we are seriously considering that idea.

In view of the scale of Government spending cuts there is a real danger is that social care and services for older people will suffer.

We would do everything in our power to ensure that is not the case and we are proud of our record in protecting services for the elderly.

However, we are not complacent and are determined to ensure our older residents have the strongest possible voice; and that our administration is completely aware of their needs.

8.14 Question from Councillor Tim Archer:

Will the Mayor give details to the Council on the sale of Poplar Town Hall situated on Poplar High Street?

Response by Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources

Poplar Town Hall was formally declared surplus to Council requirement by Cabinet on 12 January 2011 and officers were given authority to dispose of the property in the open market.

The property was openly and widely marketed by external agents on 9 May 2011 a wide range of bids were received on 8 July 2011.

The property was sold to the highest bidder. The transaction completed on 11 November 2011.

8.15 Question from Councillor Dr Stephanie Eaton:

What specific type of surface to air missiles does the Ministry of Defence propose to install on the Lexington building in Bow? If these are to be Starstreak II missiles with three projectiles to increase the probability of impact with an unauthorised aircraft, what is the impact on people and property on the ground of the projectiles that do not impact on the target? What powers if any does the Council have to oppose or veto the installation of these missiles?

Response by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Thank you to Councillor Eaton for your question.

The Council is not provided directly with any technical information regarding the type of surface to air missiles being deployed as part of the Olympic Games security plan.

I know that you share our concerns that regardless of the type of missile, their use over a populated area would represent a significant hazard.

The Council has no powers to veto such installations which are, unfortunately, a feature of modern Olympic Games security. Neither are we provided with any information about rules of engagement governing how or under what scenarios they will be used.

8.16 Question from Councillor Zara Davis:

How much has the Council spent on purchasing Olympic tickets?

Response by Mayor Lutfur Rahman

Thank you for your question. Due to LOCOG publicity rules, we were unable to promote this initiative. However, because of your intervention and the publicity this generated, I am pleased to say that on the 1st day over 200 people have applied for the tickets.

The Council has spent £35,125 (+VAT) on purchasing Olympic tickets.

The Mayor and I are committed to maximising opportunities for local residents to experience the Olympic Games and to ensuring as many local people can secure tickets as possible.

Tower Hamlets Council ordered the full 400 tickets offered. These are to be made available by the Mayor free to residents of the Borough.

All 400 tickets will be made available to residents through a transparent process due to launch in the coming weeks. Tickets have been paid for with money given by the Police from the proceeds of crime, and other boroughs have also done the same.

8.17 Question from Councillor Lutfa Begum

Housing shortages and overcrowding remains one of the most pressing needs for local residents, can the Mayor update this meeting how many houses he has built? And will any Tower Hamlets residents suffer the fate that some Newham residents have due to the government's welfare reform changes by moving 100 miles from the borough?

Response by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing

To date 2010 new build affordable homes have been completed.

The Government's Welfare Reform proposals are particularly harsh and their impact places serious challenges on all London councils in their efforts to source affordable accommodation locally.

Certainly, some councils seem less inclined than others to work to mitigate this impact but the Mayor and Lead Member for Housing in Tower Hamlets are able to confirm the efforts of the Council's Housing Options Service in working with private sector landlords and tenants in the borough to prevent homelessness and so keep families in their homes.

The Housing Options Service has so far been successful in both preventing homelessness and avoiding the use of non-London accommodation. Just

how long that success can be maintained depends on the extent and impact of the progressive roll out of the Government's Welfare reforms.

8.18 Question from Councillor Gloria Thienel:

Are there any proposals by the council to rent out our Council Charity Collection bins to private companies for profit?

Response by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment

The Council does not own any charity bins. All bins in the borough are owned by charities.

However, I would like to state that I would urge residents to drop their clothes off at charity shops and not to use charity bins.

Clothes donated to charity shops are sold per item, clothes donated to bins are sold by weight by private companies. This means charities gain far more income through their shops than the bins. Donations to bins earn private companies a profit.

8.19 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani

How will the Mayor ensure that any disruption to local people is minimised by using Victoria Park as a live site during the 2012 Games?

Response by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture

Inevitably when a once-in-a-lifetime event such as the Olympics in London takes place, there will be some disruption, but the council is working with its partners to ensure that any impact is minimal.

The contract with the promoters of the Live Sites (including Victoria Park) includes the Council, the Greater London Authority and the Royal Parks and we have all signed up to do all we can to prevent disruption or minimise it.

The contract contains conditions of use that set out clearly controls for noise levels and other issues of concern such as keeping the park clean.

8.20 Question from Councillor Dr Emma Jones:

How many residents have contacted the Council this year about the amount of time taken for land searches to be processed when buying or selling property?

Response by Councillor Rofique Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration

According to directorate records, to date there have been eight recorded enquiries received by our Planning and Building Control Department regarding the length of time taken to process land searches.

8.21 Question from Councillor Maium Miah

With less than 100 days to the greatest show on earth, can the mayor update us how the council is preparing for the Olympic Games, and how Tower Hamlets residents will benefit from the Games?

Response by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture

1,541 job offers have been made to Tower Hamlets residents by LOCOG contractors so far and this figure is set to rise further. In addition, 1,668 Tower Hamlets residents have worked on the construction of the Olympic Park site over the past 5 years. 249 Tower Hamlets residents are employed directly by LOCOG which represents 8.2% of LOCOG's total workforce.

External investment has been attracted to Mile End Park Leisure Centre to upgrade the athletics facilities to international competition standard.

In addition, the Council has secured £5m of Public Realm improvement funding to bring about improvements to Whitechapel via the HS2012 initiative, Grove Road and improvements to Fish Island access.

These improvements will deliver a lasting economic benefit to the local economy.

8.22 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan

ASB and fear of crime remains one of the main concerns for local people, can the Mayor update us on the work of the THEOs?

Response by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed

The council recognises that the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour remains a real concern for the community.

38 police officers have been acquired to combat this issue.

Although significant achievements have been made in reducing the number of reported incidents, we know that people still express a desire to see a more visible enforcement presence.

The introduction of the THEO's two years ago was a direct response to such concerns. The THEOs have enabled the Council to directly determine where and when the officers are deployed, dealing with incidents which would unfortunately not always be dealt with by the police due to competing priorities.

The annual resident's survey results demonstrate the positive impact the officers are having.

Community Safety is a priority for the Council and therefore additional THEOs will be patrolling the community over the next few months.

Since the introduction of the drinking controlled zone the officers have made 2595 alcohol seizures. In the first 3 months of this year they have made 381 seizures and if this is placed against alcohol related ASB reports there has been a reduction of 29% against the same time last year.

The officers are currently working closely with Tower Hamlets Homes and they will shortly assist with the council response to noise related ASB through the night.