

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2017****THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG****Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs	Councillor Clare Harrison
Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Danny Hassell
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Mahbub Alam	Councillor Abjol Miah
Councillor Shah Alam	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Md. Maium Miah
Councillor Craig Aston	Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Rachel Blake	Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Chris Chapman	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Dave Chesterton	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Andrew Cregan	Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Andrew Wood
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Sabina Akhtar in the Chair

During the meeting, the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Minutes are presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda. The order the business was taken in at the meeting was as follows:

- Item 1 - Apologies for absence.
- Item 2 – Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
- Item 3 – Minutes.
- Item 4 – Announcements.
- Item 5.1 – 5.2 – Petitions.
- Item 12.15 - Motion regarding Westferry Printworks Secondary School
- Item 5.3 – Petitions.
- Item 6 – Public Questions.

- Item 7 – Mayor’s Report.
- Item 13.1 Urgent Motion regarding the Autumn Budget 2017 and Fire Safety measures.
- Item 8 – Members Questions.
- Item 12.4 - Motion regarding Operation Lynemouth.
- Item 12.8 - Motion regarding the future of Old Ford Housing Association.
- Item 9 – Reports from the Executive and the Council’s Committees.
- Item 9.1 - Report following an Individual Mayoral Decision - Acquisition of Affordable Homes
- Item 9.2 - Report of the General Purposes Committee - Constitution Review – Council Procedure Rules.
- Item 9.3 Report of the General Purposes Committee - Constitution Review – Member/Officer Relations’ Protocol.
- Item 9.4 Report of the Audit Committee - Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2017/18.
- Item 10 – Reports and Questions on Joint Arrangements/External Organisations.
- Item 11 – Other Business.
- Item 11.1 - Review of proportionality and allocation of places on committees and panels of the Council 2017/18

The Speaker of the Council brought the Council up to date with some of her activities since the previous Council meeting. She reported that in September Tower Hamlets hosted ‘London in Bloom’ for the first time, for its 50th Anniversary receiving excellent feedback and also winning awards.

The Speaker had also attended a number of events including: the Costermongers’ Harvest Festival and parade bringing together all London Borough Civic Heads, the British Bangladesh Fashion Week event, the London Mayors’ Association Annual Civic Service and also the launch of ‘Hate Crime Awareness Week’ in London.

She was also pleased to announce that she had welcomed a Chinese Task Group and the crew of a French Ship that visited the Borough’s docks and had also participated in Citizenship Ceremonies, many community events and celebrations.

The Speaker had enjoyed meeting local schoolchildren in the Town Hall as part of Local Democracy Week, visited local schools, her charities and had attended award ceremonies, celebrating the achievements of young people. In addition, the Speaker had attended the launch of the Poppy Appeal, undertaken fundraising for the appeal and had represented the Council at remembrance events

Turning to future events, the Speaker reminded the Council that her Charity Ball would take place on Monday 4th December 2017. She invited all to attend and if they were not able to, to make a donation. The Speaker reported that she would also be hosting a Squadron Air Cadets Awards Ceremony and

be attending the Civic Awards, Charity Dinners, the International Women's Day Afternoon Tea and the Civic Service.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah
- Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury

Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillors Rachael Saunders, Amina Ali, Rabina Khan, Shafi Ahmed, Ayas Miah, Joshua Peck, and Rachel Blake.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Shafi Ahmed declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5.3 Petition regarding Zebra Crossing at Henriques Street, E1 as a Governor at Harry Gosling Primary School.

Councillor Denise Jones declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda item 8.2, a Member Question relating to the Council Tax reduction scheme as she was self employed.

Councillor Mahbub Alam declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda item 8.2, a Member Question relating to the Council Tax reduction scheme as he worked for a car hire company. He also declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items 12.17, Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets and 12.18 Motion regarding Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets for Residents (which were not considered) as a housing tenant.

Councillor Sirajul Islam declared a personal interest in Agenda item 12.8 Motion regarding the future of Old Ford Housing Association as he was a Council tenant.

Councillor Rajib Ahmed declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 12.17 Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets as a leaseholder of property.

Councillor Dave Chesterton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 12.17 Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets as a landlord of property in the borough.

Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 12.17 Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets as a leaseholder of property in the borough.

Councillor Helal Uddin declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 12.17 Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets as he and his wife were leaseholders of property in the borough. He also declared a personal

interest in this item as his employer had a working relationship with Poplar HARCA.

Councillor David Edgar declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 12.17, Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets as his wife is a landlord of property.

The following Councillors declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in Agenda Items 12.17 Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets and 12.18 Motion regarding Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets as landlords of property:

- Councillor Shah Alam
- Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
- Councillor Harun Miah
- Councillor Suluk Ahmed

Councillors Craig Aston, Clare Harrisson and Danny Hassell declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 12.17 Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets as private renters in the Borough.

Members declaring Disclosable Pecuniary Interests would be required to leave the room for the duration of the relevant agenda items.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 20 September 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

There were no announcements.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition regarding Watts Grove

Terry McGrenera addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He thanked the petitioner for all the hard work that he had undertaken in relation to housing issues in the borough over the years. He and Councillor Sirajul Islam, Cabinet Member for Housing were willing to meet with the petitioner to discuss his particular concerns. He considered that the rents secured at the Watts Grove development were genuinely affordable. The new homes would accommodate residents from the Borough's housing waiting list based on need. He also confirmed that Tower Hamlets Homes would manage the development and the arrangements were to be reviewed in 2018.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

5.2 Petition regarding new secondary school, Westferry Printworks site

Father Tom Pyke and others addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services then responded to the matters raised in the petition. She thanked the petitioners and also Councillors on the Isle of Dogs for highlighting the issues raised in the petition at an early stage.

She also explained that whilst the Mayor and Cabinet welcomed the new school, they shared the concerns about the government's approach to selecting the provider. They would continue to contact the government to ensure that the views of local community were taken into account regarding the selection of the provider. Councillor Whitelock Gibbs invited fellow Councillors from other parties to join with them in this.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Children's, for a written response within 28 days.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Dave Chesterton **moved** and Councillor Danny Hassell, **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that agenda item 12.15 Motion regarding Westferry Printworks Secondary School be taken as the next item of business". The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

5.3 Petition regarding Zebra Crossing at Henriques Street, E1

Lukey Begum addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. The Mayor stated that he had met with the school governors and had visited the area outside the school to assess the situation. The Council took seriously the issue of road safety and would be developing plans to address the issues highlighted in the petition. There would be public consultation on the proposals and it was anticipated that the new scheme should be put in place in the next few months.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The following questions followed by a supplementary question (except where indicated) were put and responded to by the Mayor or the relevant Executive Member:-

6.2 Question from Norma Vondee:

How many residents has WorkPath actually supported into work compared to Skillsmatch?

Response of Councillor Joshua Peck, Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Development:

I am delighted to be able to say that WorkPath has resulted in 416 residents getting into work in its first six months of operation. That's a 41% increase on what Skillsmatch achieved in the same period last year.

(No supplemental question was asked)

6.4 Question from Mohammad Rafique Ullah

How do rent levels at Watts Grove compare with rent levels at Poplar Baths and Dame Collet House?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development and Waste:

When Mayor Biggs was first elected, he asked us to do an Affordability Commission to get to the bottom of what genuinely affordable homes meant now. We found that under the previous Mayor, rents were set too high for local people to afford, often due to expensive PFI deals that the previous Mayor signed up to. Rents on new Council homes agreed under the previous Mayor for example at Poplar Baths, Bradwell Street and Dame Collet House were set at expensive framework rents. Our new rent levels which will be social rent and the Tower Hamlets living rent at a proportion of local incomes will make new affordable homes far more affordable to those on low incomes saving residents significant amounts of money. We also took the decision to apply these new rents levels at Watts Grove.

Supplementary question from Mohammad Rafique Ullah:

Do you have a limit on affordable rents and what do you mean by affordable rents?

Councillor Blake's response to supplementary question:

Sadly this Government's affordable rents could be anything up to 80% of market rents. We think that is completely unaffordable for our residents. So for us, we are setting rent levels at social rent and at the Tower Hamlets living rent which is about a third of average incomes in Tower Hamlets. There is still

much more to do to make housing genuinely affordable, including encouraging other social landlords to take up these lower rents, and to really start tackling private landlords on their rent levels. Our new rent levels are definitely a big step in the right direction.

6.5 Question from Polly Avison:

How many police officers and PCSOs have been cut from Tower Hamlets?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Community Safety:

Due to huge cuts to the policing budget from the Conservative Government, Tower Hamlets lost almost a quarter of their police from the seven years following May 2010. Since the Tories took power, there has been a reduction from 818 officers to just 630. Tower Hamlets also lost more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of their PCSOs. 78% since 2010. More importantly, in the absence of intervention from central Government, we've taken steps ourselves to increase the police presence on our streets. We've ring fenced funding of £3m for police officers in Tower Hamlets, committing £3m of funding over the next three years to help protect neighbourhood policing. The police officers are tasked with tackling issues that residents told us were their biggest concerns, such as tackling anti-social behaviour, acid attacks, drug dealing and violent crime. 14 officers will be responsible for tackling crime on estates and 25 additional officers will work across the borough. A new 'Designing Out Crime' officer will also help planners, housing providers and developers to ensure that future developments consider community safety issues from the outset and design them out before being built. The Government expects local councils to step in to fill the gap – while we are doing everything we can, like funding extra officers, we simply cannot replace every police officer that the Government scraps. The Met has already lost £600 million since 2010 and the Government is threatening to go further. These are not sustainable cuts to the Met's budget and are damaging frontline policing and putting the public at risk. We are continuing to urge the Government to think again.

(No supplemental question was asked)

Questions 6.1, 6.3, and 6.6 were not put due to the absence of the questioner. Written responses would be provided to the questions. (Note: The written responses are included in Appendix 'A' to these minutes.)

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council, referring to his written report circulated at the meeting, summarising key events, engagements and meetings since the last Council meeting.

When the Mayor had completed his report and at the invitation of the Speaker, the Leaders of the Independent Group, the People's Alliance of

Tower Hamlets and the Conservative Group, responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Councillor Rachel Blake **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.5, Rule 13.1 be suspended to enable an urgent motion regarding the Autumn Budget 2017 and Fire Safety measures to be considered". The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The following questions and in each case supplementary questions were put (except where indicated) and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member-

8.1 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin:

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member update Council on ongoing work to tackle the housing crisis?

Response of Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing

I am sure that you will be aware that the Council adopted a new Housing Strategy in December 2016 which set out our plan to tackle the Housing crisis through to 2021. A lack of affordable housing is a major concern for residents and we have made significant strides forward over the past two and a half years. I pledged to provide 1,000 council homes and we're on track to meet this target. On affordable housing, Council figures show we delivered 1,070 affordable homes last year, 2016/17, and another 1,073 the year before. And under my new Living Rent policy, rents for new affordable homes are more affordable to those on low incomes, saving residents up to £6,000 a year. We are also investing £3m in local neighbourhoods to make them safer, cleaner and greener. Further, we're driving up standards in the private rented sector with landlord licensing scheme and our new Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter. The Council is doing a great deal to tackle the housing crisis, but we need the Government to back us up and take the challenge seriously, something we discussed already in the motion earlier.

Supplementary question from Councillor Uddin:

What sort of strategies are in place to increase social housing as well as affordable housing in the borough and will the Lead Member ensure me that the work programmes created by the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee will be supported and resourced by the administration to ensure that fire safety issues are being dealt with effectively?

Councillor Sirajul Islam's response to supplementary question:

We have recently announced £119m funding to purchase surplus housing stock from registered providers including £19m to buy homes from Poplar HARCA. We have purchased additional homes for use as temporary accommodation. We have also purchased new housing from developers as part of their planning obligations. We'll discuss this in more detail later this evening, but this is a massive investment in affordable homes for our residents highlighting just how seriously we take the housing crisis.

In terms of fire safety, we take this very seriously. We cannot forget the 71 lives lost at Grenfell Tower. The Mayor has allocated around £30m for fire safety work. As you know, we are already carrying out work at Brewster House and on the Cranbrook Estate. Under Mayor Biggs' leadership in 2015 we carried out fire risk assessments of every Council block and registered provider block which is something the previous administration failed to and left our residents in grave danger.

8.2 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman

Following the changes to the Council Tax reduction scheme by the Mayor in April 2017, how is the Council supporting self-employed residents – like mini cab drivers and driving instructors etc. – in relation to their council tax rebate and reduction?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Resources:

The changes made to the local Council Tax reduction scheme earlier this year, kept the option of providing up to a 100% discount. Many Councils throughout the county require all working people to make a contribution to Council Tax. We did make some changes to the assessment criteria that took into account the changes that come from the introduction of the universal credit. The introduction of which means that the Council will no longer be responsible for housing benefit for working age claimants. The Government in their budget made some small changes to universal credit, but really did not make the changes that were absolutely necessary. The introduction of universal credit by the Government has been a disaster for many people. It means that not only are many of the rules around benefits changing, but the government is also stopping sharing information with Councils and is cutting the funding that they give Councils to process benefits. This means that we have no verified information on actual income for those in receipt of universal credit which is the information that we previously used to base the local Council tax calculation on. As a result, one of the changes that was made by the Council in January this year was the introduction of a minimum income floor which was based on 35 hours work on a national minimum wage. That is the same criteria that is going to be applied and is applied under universal credit which will increasingly affect the Borough's self-employed claimants as universal credit is rolled out. That has had an impact on some self-employed claimants.

Supplementary question from Councillor Rahman:

Not every resident receives universal credit and I think for the Council to have a blanket policy affecting every single working resident is not right. When I asked Officers what legal legislation they used to reach that decision they could not answer maybe you could answer that question. What legal legislation have you used to reach this decision that is affecting the self-employed working people in this borough?

Councillor Edgar's response to supplementary question:

Councils are able to set their Council tax reduction schemes. The Government abolished a number of years ago the national scheme and also reduced significantly the funding that came to it. But what we have done in response to help those people who face problems as a result of the changes, that will affect more and more people as universal credit is rolled out, is to provide support to people so that everybody who feels that they are in financial hardship and feels that they have been affected by the changes can contact the Council and have a discussion with the Council. What the Council can do in response is reduce financial hardship through the support it provides. The Council can provide help on work and advice on benefits. These measures will form part of a report that goes to the November Cabinet. This is in addition to the hardship scheme that was introduced with the Council Tax reduction scheme. We are doing this in the context where the Government continues to push forward universal credit. This makes the work that we do as a Council to support people into work through the hardship fund and through the other things we can do all the more important.

8.5 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun:

How did the Council respond to the Met Police consultation on police front counter closures?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Community Safety:

A detailed written response from the Council was submitted to the London Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC) opposing the closures. There were 17 questions in total covering many aspects of community engagement and accessibility. One of which specifically asked "Do you agree that it is right that the Metropolitan Police Service prioritise police officers over poorly-used front counters?" The Council did not agree with this proposed prioritisation which is far from simple. The Council expressed serious concerns over the impact of government cuts on the police and that MOPAC should not be placed in the situation of having to choose between police officers and front counters.

Concerns were raised on the loss of two front counters in the borough and the isolation this would cause. We offered alternative options to avoid their closure.

(No supplemental question was asked)

Questions 8.3 – 4 were not put due to the absence of the questioners. Questioners 8.6- 29 were not put due to lack of time. Written responses would be provided to the questions. (Note: The written responses are included in Appendix 'A' to these minutes.)

Procedural Motion

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam, **seconded**, a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that agenda item 12. 4 Motion regarding Operation Lynemouth be taken as the next item of business”. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Councillor Marc Francis, **seconded**, a procedural motion “that under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied such that agenda item 12. 8 Motion regarding the future of Old Ford Housing Association be taken as the next item of business”. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

Extension of time limit for the meeting

Mayor John Biggs **moved**, and Councillor Danny Hassell **seconded**, a procedural motion that “under Procedure Rule 15.11.7 the meeting be extended for up to an additional 10 minutes to enable item 12. 8 Motion regarding the future of Old Ford Housing Association and the remaining reports on the agenda to be considered”. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

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

9.1 Report following an Individual Mayoral Decision - Acquisition of Affordable Homes

The Council considered a decision following on from an Individual Mayoral Decision published on Friday 10 November 2017. The recommendation was put to the vote under the guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9. Accordingly it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the allocation of £119.0 million in the capital programme to fund the purchase of, and any works required to dwellings be agreed.

9.2 Report of the General Purposes Committee - Constitution Review – Council Procedure Rules

The Council considered a report of the General Purposes Committee following a review of the Council Procedure Rules section of the Council's Constitution. The recommendation was put to the vote under the guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That the revised Council Procedure Rules at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

9.3 Report of the General Purposes Committee - Constitution Review – Member/Officer Relations' Protocol

The Council considered a report of the General Purposes Committee following a review of the Member/Officer Relations' Protocol section of the Council's Constitution. The recommendation was put to the vote under the guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That the revised Member/Officer Relations' Protocol at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

9.4 Report of the Audit Committee - Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2017/18

The Council considered a report from the Audit Committee setting out the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2017/18. The recommendations were put to the vote under the guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9. Accordingly it was

RESOLVED:

That the Council note:

1. The contents of the treasury management activities and performance against targets for half year ending 30th September 2017;
2. The Council's outstanding investments which amount to £447.1m at 30th September 2017 as set out at appendix 2 to the report;
3. The potential impact on the Council of becoming a retail client with effect from 3rd January 2018 as set out at section 3.7 of the report; and
4. The protections available to retail clients that the Council will forgo as a result of opting up to professional client as set out at appendix 4 to the report.

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

There was no business to transact under this agenda item.

11. OTHER BUSINESS**11.1 Review of proportionality and allocation of places on committees and panels of the Council 2017/18**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Governance, in respect of changes to the proportionality calculations for allocating places on the Council's Committees. The recommendations were put to the vote under the guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That the review of proportionality as at section 3 of the report be noted and the allocation of seats on committees and panels be agreed for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2017/18 as set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report.
2. To note the committees and panels established for the municipal year 2017/18 as listed in paragraph 4.2 as agreed at the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2017.
3. That Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury be appointed as a Member of the Development Committee and Councillors Md Maium Miah and Mohammed Mufti Miah be appointed deputies of the Development Committee.
4. That the Corporate Director, Governance be authorised to approve the appointment of ungrouped Councillors to any committee places not allocated by the Council to a political group, after consultation with those Councillors and the Speaker of the Council.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**12.4 Motion regarding Operation Lynemouth**

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Peter Golds **moved** and Councillor Andrew Wood **seconded** the following friendly amendment to the motion:

Insert as Item 2 after this Council notes;

The report contains a number of significant observations including;

From Page 12

“It would appear that the original MPS investigation failed to secure pivotal evidence which could have led to further enquiries. Operation Lynemouth has done so and is seeking early advice from the CPS as to whether the evidence provides realistic opportunities for investigation and prosecution.”

From Page 14

“The MPS’s fraud squad considered ten matters during the original investigation, including allegations of fraud, bribery, perjury and tax evasion, but did not make any arrests. Operation Lynemouth has already identified potential evidential opportunities, although there is still much work to be done.”

Insert as Item 4 after this Council resolves;

Item 4

That the residents of the borough will look to the police, electoral officials, political parties, their candidates and supporters to ensure that the elections to be held in 2018 are free, fair and untainted by the malpractice which so damaged the reputation of this borough in 2014.

Renumber Item 4 as Item 5

Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Sirajul Islam accepted the amendment and altered their motion accordingly.

Councillor Oliur Rahman attempted to move a further amendment to this motion. However the Council’s Monitoring Officer advised the Speaker that the content of the amendment was out of order so it should not be accepted.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

1. That Operation Lynemouth has published its second interim report, which is investigating *‘any alleged criminal or electoral wrongdoing... committed, counselled or procured by a senior figure (or senior figures) within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets’* between 25 October 2010 and 23 April 2015.
2. The report contains a number of significant observations including;

From Page 12

“It would appear that the original MPS investigation failed to secure pivotal evidence which could have led to further enquiries. Operation Lynemouth has done so and is seeking early advice from the CPS as to whether the evidence provides realistic opportunities for investigation and prosecution.”

From Page 14

“The MPS’s fraud squad considered ten matters during the original investigation, including allegations of fraud, bribery, perjury and tax evasion, but did not make any arrests. Operation Lynemouth has already identified potential evidential opportunities, although there is still much work to be done.”

This Council believes that:

1. Although, as was stated in the election Court judgement *‘the election of all THF (Tower Hamlets First) Councillors must be taken to have been achieved with the benefit of the corrupt and illegal practices’*, all councillors in Tower Hamlets have a legal and moral duty to support the police investigation into the wrongdoing of the past;
2. While many councillors who were elected as part of Tower Hamlets First still serve on the Council in the Tower Hamlets Independent Group and the People’s Alliance of Tower Hamlets, including potentially two Mayoral Election candidates, and that they remain in denial about the corrupt regime which they were a part of, all sitting councillors and the Mayor have a personal responsibility to address the failures and criminality of the Lutfur Rahman administration and help the borough move forward. We note with sadness that while a majority accept this responsibility a sizeable minority clearly do not.

This Council resolves:

1. To welcome and fully support the HMIC investigation into alleged criminal offences arising from the 2014 mayoral election;
2. That every councillor should cooperate fully with any police investigation into criminality, including coming clean about any of their own actions and proactively offering any evidence they may have of wrongdoing;
3. To work to ensure the highest possible standards in the coming election and consign the electoral fraud of the previous administration to the past;
4. That the residents of the borough will look to the police, electoral officials, political parties, their candidates and supporters to ensure that

the elections to be held in 2018 are free, fair and untainted by the malpractice which so damaged the reputation of this borough in 2014.

5. To condemn in the strongest possible terms the illegality of the former mayor.

12.8 Motion regarding the future of Old Ford Housing Association

Councillor Marc Francis **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

1. Old Ford Housing Association (OFHA) was established in 1998 as the successor body to Tower Hamlets Housing Action Trust (HAT);
2. OFHA was a subsidiary of Circle 33 Housing Trust for financing purposes, but was accountable to its own Board of tenants, leaseholders and independent members;
3. In 2005, Circle 33 merged with Anglia Housing to form Circle Anglia Ltd, and that other associations joined later to form Circle Housing Group;
4. In July 2007, LBTH transferred the "Parkside" council estates to OFHA with the promise to refurbish individual flats and the estates within five years;
5. In 2015, following complaints from LB Islington and LBTH about the performance of its repairs service, the Social Housing Regulator found evidence of "serious detriment" to tenants and downgraded Circle Housing Group, requiring an action plan to improve governance;
6. In response, Circle put forward an "action plan", which involved closing down its subsidiaries, including Old Ford HA, and centralising services, moving most Bow-based staff to a new call-centre in Kent;
7. In summer 2016, despite clear evidence of a continuing deterioration in services, including tenants being left without heating for weeks on end, the Regulator upgraded Circle again;
8. Within days, Circle announced its intention to merge with Affinity Sutton *"to create the largest housing association in Western Europe"*;
9. In response to Circle's "consultation", more than 1,000 residents signed a petition opposing the proposed closure of Old Ford, which led to Old Ford's Board declining to agree to Circle's proposal;

10. Following a Parliamentary debate initiated by Rushanara Ali MP, the Regulator finally began an investigation, which confirmed “serious detriment” had again been caused to tenants and resulted in the newly-merged Circle / Affinity Sutton being downgraded again in December 2016;
11. The former Chief Executive and Chair of Circle have both left the new organisation - Clarion Housing Group - and it is now run by former Affinity Sutton staff;
12. While Clarion’s new Management Team has made some improvement in services, it is continuing with Circle’s plan to close subsidiaries and centralise services;
13. Clarion has asked Old Ford’s Board to consult residents again on closing Old Ford;
14. At least two other local community-based housing associations have expressed an interest in coming together with Old Ford.

This Council believes:

1. The ex-HAT and “Parkside” estates in Bow were transferred to Old Ford on the basis that it would be a “*community-based housing association*”, and that residents voted in favour of the transfers from LBTH on that basis;
2. As the former landlord, Tower Hamlets Council has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that any substantive changes to the governance arrangements at Old Ford are only made with the consent of residents;

This Council resolves:

1. To oppose any attempt by Clarion Housing Group to close Old Ford without the formal consent of residents;
2. To support the Mayor and Cabinet in opposing these plans publicly, including by raising objections to the Housing Minister and Social Housing Regulator, and by legal means if necessary;
3. To support the Mayor and Cabinet in facilitating direct discussions between Old Ford’s Board and those other community-based housing associations that have expressed an interest in combining with Old Ford.

12.15 Motion regarding Westferry Printworks Secondary School

Councillor Dave Chesterton **moved** and Candida Ronald **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED:

The Council notes:

1. The Council's Local Plan adopted in April 2013 identifies the site of the former Printworks on Westferry Road as a priority location for a new secondary school on the Isle of Dogs.
2. A new 1,200 place secondary school on this site was granted planning consent in May 2016. When this opens this will be the first new second secondary school on the Isle of Dogs since George Green's School opened in 1975, more than 40 years ago;
3. Currently there is a surplus of secondary school places on the Isle of Dogs (just over 7% across all year groups). Current projected demand for secondary school places indicates that additional provision will not be required until the start of the school year 2021/22;
4. The "free school presumption" is the process Local Authorities have to follow where they intend to open a new school. It is set out in section 6(A) of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 which provides that where a Local Authority believes that a new school needs to be established in their area, they must seek proposals for the establishment of an Academy or Free School;
5. However, the guidance clearly states (para 17) that 'In considering the need for a new school, local authorities should factor in any other free school projects that the department has approved and are due to open;'
6. The Secretary of State has made it clear that she considers Canary Wharf College to be an appropriate provider as it is already open as a school and includes secondary provision from September 2016;
7. Even where the Council decides to run a competition, the Secretary of State is the ultimate decision maker and may decide to appoint a sponsor other than that recommended to her by a local authority following competition. The guidance states: "The Secretary of State reserves the right to agree a sponsor of her own choice (from the list of approved sponsors) on the basis that she may have further evidence about a proposer, or proposers, which means that none of those put forward is suitable." In this instance it seems likely she may decide to appoint Canary Wharf College despite other expressions of interest submitted, making the process abortive for the Council and other schools who bid;
8. If the Council opts to run a competition, the Council could bear costs of up to £30million, in addition to the costs of running the free school competition. The costs would remain the responsibility of the Council regardless of the Secretary of State's decision on who the provider will be;

9. If the school goes ahead as a central free school determined by the Department for Education, and the Council does not run a competition, the capital costs and the pre and post-opening costs for the school would be borne by the Department for Education;

This council also believes:

10. That the previous Regional Schools Commissioner indicated that, by virtue of the fact Canary Wharf College has already been approved by the Secretary of State to open a secondary school on the Isle of Dogs, it would be fair to assume the Government intends to approve Canary Wharf College despite any recommendation process.

The Council Believes;

1. There is no need to rush to select an operator for the Westferry Printworks Secondary School, this secondary school will not be required until September 2021;
2. The process by which an operator for this new school is selected should be by open competition, completely transparent and the views of parents placed at the centre of the selection process;
3. Potential operators must be able to evidence outstanding success in:
 - a. High educational attainment for children from diverse backgrounds;
 - b. Community cohesion and inclusiveness;
 - c. Actively reaching out to children from poor families;
 - d. Actively reaching out to children of parents from all faiths;
 - e. Positively encouraging children with special needs.
4. Ideologically motivated interference by the Secretary of State in this selection process is unacceptable;
5. That by making the Council liable for what could cost £30m, without giving them the power to decide on who will run the school is entirely wrong and flies in the face of parents' wishes and local democracy;

The Council Resolves to:

1. Ask the Mayor to continue to stand up for the rights of local parents, to have their voices heard and to write to the Secretary of State urging her to properly consider and be guided by local opinion before making any decision on this site;
2. Ask the Mayor to urge the Secretary of State and Regional Schools Commissioner not to undermine local decision-making and accountability, and to be open about their intentions relating to the Westferry Printworks Secondary School and to make this process fully open by waiving in advance of any local competition, the requirement for council to fund as much as £30m costs should the recommendation of such a competition not be approved by the Secretary of State;

3. Call on Conservative Councillors to add their voices to local concerns and make representations to the Department for Education to enable a genuine free school competition where the decision is not pre-determined and which does not cost the council millions even if the local process is then overturned by Government;
4. Refer the petition signed by local people to the Secretary of State and Regional Schools Commissioner.

Motions 12.1, 12.3, 12.5-12.7, 12.9- 12.14 and 12.16-12. 21 were not debated due to lack of time.

13. URGENT MOTIONS

The Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to enable the following urgent motion to be debated without notice:

13.1 Motion regarding the Autumn Budget 2017 and Fire Safety measures

Councillor David Edgar **moved** and Mayor John Biggs, **seconded**, the motion as **tabled**.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

1. The Government's Autumn Budget 2017 was presented to Parliament on 22nd November 2017.
2. The Budget failed to address the crisis facing our public services, directly caused by the Government's austerity programme.
3. That the Council is committed to keeping our residents safe with a focused programme of works based on up-to-date and professionally considered Fire Risk Assessments, but the Government's Budget did not include any new funding for fire safety measures, such as sprinklers, which many residents across the UK have understandably called for.

This Council believes:

1. That the Government's continued austerity programme is having a real impact on residents here in Tower Hamlets and across the UK:
 - a. Cuts of £18.7m to schools in Tower Hamlets, the equivalent of £508 per pupil;
 - b. 295 fewer police officers and PCSOs on streets in Tower Hamlets since the Tories came to power in 2010;
 - c. Government cuts to council funding have meant that Tower Hamlets Council has to save £58m over the coming years;
 - d. By 2019, local authorities will be forced to spend 19% less per household under the Tories;

- e. An open letter, signed by five major children's charities and organisations, warned that children's social care will have a £2bn funding gap nationally by 2020;
 - f. Child poverty has risen to 4 million under the Conservative Government and is set to rise by a further million by the end of this Parliament;
 - g. Cuts to adult social care budgets are expected to reach £6.3 billion by March 2018;
 - h. There are over 4 million people on NHS waiting lists in England, and there are 6,000 fewer mental health nurses than in 2010.
2. That the Budget should have included extra funding for fire safety measures, including cladding removal, fire doors, other protection systems and sprinklers.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Mayor to write to the Prime Minister:
 - a. Demanding that proper funding is provided for public services;
 - b. Demanding that the Government properly fund fire safety works across the UK, for example sprinklers, and accept that its disastrous programme of deregulation and cost cutting is putting lives at risk.

The meeting ended at 10.18 p.m.

Speaker of the Council