


Non-Executive Report of the: Council 17 th January 2018	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance	Classification: Unrestricted
Questions submitted by Members of the Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services.
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions that were submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Mayor, the Speaker or the Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee at the Council meeting on Wednesday 17 January 2018
2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4, questions relating to Executive functions and decisions taken by the Mayor are put to the Mayor unless he delegates such a decision to another Member, who will therefore be responsible for answering the question. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will answer questions directed to the Mayor.
3. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. Council Procedure Rule 10.7 (a) provides for an answer to take the form of a written answer circulated to the questioner, a reference to a published work or a direct oral answer.
5. There is a time limit of thirty minutes at the Council meeting for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any questions not put within this time are dealt with by way of written responses.
6. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

32 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

9.1 Question from Councillor John Pierce

The scale of Government cuts to police budgets has led to police front counter closures in Limehouse and Brick Lane – what impact will this have?

9.2 Question from Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Will the Mayor inform the council if he cut 34 council-funded police officers in his 2016 budget?

9.3 Question from Councillor Clare Harrison

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on Operation Continuum, the police and council operation to tackle drug dealers?

9.4 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Is Tower Hamlets Drugs Service in Special Measures?

9.5 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell

Can the lead member please update us on the outcome of the Ofsted monitoring visit for Children's Social Care that took place in December?

9.6 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

The Mayor will be aware of the spate of recent acid attacks on the Isle of Dogs and street robberies in Limehouse. In view of the sums of money held by Tower Hamlets Council under section 106 agreements, when will the administration provide modern, high quality and permanent CCTV cameras in Marsh Wall, Glengall Grove, Blackwall Way, Millharbour and Narrow Street, all of which are both areas of development and have been subjected to attacks and robberies as outlined above?

9.7 Question from Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed

What support does the Council offer for new and small businesses?

9.8 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman

Will the Mayor inform the council why did he not personally ensure that the £2m bribery allegation eventually reported by the Sunday Times on 10 December involving, the journalist stated, a Labour-supporting businessman who campaigned for the Mayor in 2015 and 4 councillors (that a lay person would assume are Labour given the businessman's allegiance) and, were not reported to the police straight away in late 2015 by him when the Mayor was first informed about the criminal allegations?

9.9 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders

How will the Mayor tackle air pollution in Tower Hamlets?

9.10 Question from Councillor Abdul Asad

How has the Mayor's decision to charge for adult social care services which includes free homecare affected vulnerable and disabled adults, their carers and families?

9.11 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin

How will the Mayor's £5m Tackling Poverty Fund be used?

9.12 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

Will the Mayor confirm that the council's Anti-Bribery Policy will, under his administration, "Rigorously investigate all instances of alleged bribery," and assist the police and other investigative authorities in all such investigations?

9.13 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed

The Mayor recently launched his new Apprenticeship Commitment. What progress has been made so far?

9.14 Question from Councillor Maium Miah

There were two recent separate horrific acid attacks in Tower Hamlets on Wednesday 27th December within the space of just two hours – one in my ward, Canary Wharf, on the Isle of Dogs.

According to the Police and other reports, a 36-year-old white woman suffered serious life-changing burns to her leg and face. No ID on the attacker or why she was attacked was established. She is in hospital at the time of writing this question.

The 2nd attack between Glengall Close and Crossharbour DLR was on an Asian male by two white men. The police stated they had decent CCTV images of two White males aged 20 – 22 years old approximately. 5"10 tall.

Given that Tower Hamlets is the third worst London borough for acid attacks, will the Council do more and agree to Cllr Ohid Ahmed's call for the council to use its existing regulatory powers to immediately create a 'Tower Hamlets Acid Register' on a voluntary basis for shops and businesses to record who they sell 'acid' or 'dangerous liquids' to; and to ensure acid/potentially dangerous liquid is not sold to under 18s in the borough which is being used as the weapon of choice in attacks on our innocent residents?

9.15 Question from Councillor Ayas Miah

What impact will the Mayor's Acid Charter have in tackling acid attacks locally?

9.16 Question from Councillor Abjol Miah

Given the impact on working families, mini-cab drivers and the borough's disabled and vulnerable will the Mayor now reverse his cut to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

9.17 Question from Councillor Dave Chesterton

How much S106 funding has the Council allocated since June 2015?

9.18 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman

Will the Mayor confirm the legal responsibilities and statutory duties of the council to report to the appropriate external authorities alleged criminal activity that is brought to the attention of the council, even when the activity has been undertaken by a perpetrator who is neither an employee, elected member or contractor to the council or an associated body of the council?

9.19 Question from Councillor Marc Francis

Will the Lead Member for Environmental Services instruct officers to carry out a consultation with residents in Cadogan Terrace and the Fairfield Conservation Area about extending the Controlled Parking Zone restrictions in those mini-zones to deal with the parking stress on weekends and early evenings?

9.20 Question from Councillor Harun Miah

I am concerned about the current consultation process in relation to traffic and road safety measures leading to a lack of clarity for residents, businesses and stakeholders. In relation to the urgent Shadwell ward traffic and road safety situation, I ask the Mayor if he will swiftly support improvement works of the types I list below as examples:

1. Martha St & Watney St junction - will put in place a 'No Entry' system on Martha Street - vehicles will be unable to turn into Martha Street from Watney Street;
2. Dellow Street, Lowood Street and Bewley Street - will implement a one-way system on the Dellow Street - Lowood Street - Bewley Street loop;
3. Tarling Street and Sutton Street junction - will implement a no entry system on Tarling Street, which means vehicles will not be able to turn into Tarling Street from Sutton Street.

9.21 Question from Councillor Candida Ronald

We have lovely new tennis courts in St John's Park which are proving very popular with my residents. However the final piece of the work has never been completed. Can the mayor or cabinet member tell us when the floodlights for the tennis courts in St John's Park will be working?

9.22 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed

Does the Mayor believe that the current community safety plan he has in place addresses the increasing knife crime and acid attacks we have seen in 2017?

9.23 Question from Councillor Julia Dockerill

Will the Mayor indicate what public consultation took place before deciding to lock in St Katharine's and Wapping and parts of Limehouse wards for another day this year when the Big Half Marathon takes place on Sunday 4th March 2018 resulting in closing off access to many roads and explain why with less than two months to go before the event there was still no detailed road closure information yet available to residents?

9.24 Question from Councillor Mahbub Alam

Will the Mayor inform the council how many murders have taken place in the borough for each year since 2010 until now?

9.25 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan

Will the Mayor commit to supporting campaigners of the Advocacy Support system for carers and families of vulnerable adults which ran at John Smith's Children's Centre

9.26 Question from Councillor Craig Aston

Is the Mayor aware that the St James footbridge over the entrance to the Rotherhithe tunnel connecting Limehouse and Shadwell wards has been owned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets since 2003 but as yet no council department has taken responsibility for maintenance, resulting in the lighting on it has falling into disrepair despite a number of muggings close by?

9.27 Question from Councillor Muhammad Mustaqim

Will the Mayor inform if the Labour members serving on the council's planning committees have been asked by the Council's Monitoring Officer or the Police if they were approached by a fixer with the alleged £2m bribe or, If this has not been done, will they do so now?

9.28 Question from Councillor Shah Alam

Will the Mayor ensure that genuine consultation takes place regarding the proposals for traffic calming measures put forward for Shadwell?

9.29 Question from Councillor Kibria Choudhury

Will the Mayor confirm or deny if one of his Labour Cllrs arranged an introductory meeting between the fixer, who claimed, as set out by a Sunday Times journalist, to pay a £2m bribe to 4 councillors (who a lay person would assume were Labour given the fixer's allegiances), and a developer who wanted to build one of Britain's tallest skyscrapers in Canary Wharf, Tower Hamlets?

9.30 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani

Will the Mayor inform the council how much did it cost the taxpayers to procure the external consultant, EY, and a leading QC in relation to seeking further advice (in addition to Bribery, Fraud, Best Value and other relevant policies, legislation and acts governing the Council's conduct in such circumstances which were already in place and must be followed) about the £2m bribery allegations before the council was forced to approach the police?

9.31 Question from Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah

Given the seriously negative impact of the Mayor John Biggs's new Council Tax Reduction scheme, particularly on the self-employed and vulnerable residents in my ward as well others in London Borough of Tower Hamlets, will the Mayor now admit that he misled Tower Hamlets when he stated that the council was still retaining 100% of the original scheme and any such claims should not be allowed by the Monitoring Officer on the factual accuracy ground?

9.32 Question from Councillor Suluk Ahmed

How many rape cases have been reported in the borough for each year since 2010 until now?