

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET**

**HELD AT 5.33 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2018**

**C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,  
LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present:**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Mayor John Biggs          |   |
| Councillor Sirajul Islam  | (Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing)               |
| Councillor Rachel Blake   | (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality)    |
| Councillor Asma Begum     | (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities) |
| Councillor David Edgar    | (Cabinet Member for Environment)                                      |
| Councillor Danny Hassell  | (Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People)               |
| Councillor Denise Jones   | (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)                     |
| Councillor Candida Ronald | (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)               |
| Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman | (Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth)                         |

**Other Councillors Present:**

|                        |                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Councillor Andrew Wood | (Leader of the Conservative Group) |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|

**Apologies:**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Councillor Amina Ali | (Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit) |
|----------------------|---|

**Others Present:**

|             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Mike Harmer | (Metropolitan Police) |
|-------------|-----------------------|

**Officers Present:**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Richard Chilcott | (Acting Divisional Director, Property and Major Programmes)  |
| Ann Corbett      | (Divisional Director, Community Safety)  |
| David Courcoux   | (Head of the Mayor's Office)   |
| Thorsten Dreyer  | Strategy & Business Development Manager  |
| Sharon Godman    | (Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Partnerships)   |
| Rafiqul Hoque    | (Lettings Services Manager, Housing Options Service, Development & Renewal)                              |
| John Kiwanuka    | (Housing Partnerships Manager, Housing Strategy Regeneration and Sustainability, Development & Renewal ) |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Susan Mulligan  | (Communications Advisor, Communications, Law<br>Probity & Governance )     |
| Andy Simpson    | (Business Improvement Coordinator)   |
| Matthew Vaughan | (Political Advisor to the Conservative Group,<br>Democratic Services, LPG) |
| Asmat Hussain   | (Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring<br>Officer)                 |
| Debbie Jones    | (Corporate Director, Children and Culture)                                 |
| Neville Murton  | (Acting Corporate Director, Resources)                                     |
| Denise Radley   | (Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)                           |
| Ann Sutcliffe   | (Acting Corporate Director, Place)   |
| Will Tuckley    | (Chief Executive)  |
| Tom McCourt     | (Strategic Director)   |
| Stephen Bramah  | (Deputy Head of the Mayor's office)  |
| Matthew Mannion | (Committee Services Manager, Democratic<br>Services, Governance)           |
| Joel West       | (Senior Democratic Services Officer)                                       |

## **AGENDA ORDER**

During the meeting the Mayor agreed to change the order of business due to interest in the public gallery on a particular report. He therefore took Agenda Item 6.6 (Site at 20 Alton Street) straight after Agenda Item 6.1 (Operation Continuum). For clarity the minutes are presented in the order the items appeared on the agenda.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Amina Ali (Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
- Councillor Abdal Ullah (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
- Councillor Marc Francis (Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

### **3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 28 November be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

#### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor noted that there had been an incident earlier in the day with a man wielding a knife on Roman Road which had been in the press. The Mayor confirmed that a man had been arrested and the situation was under control.

#### **5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

##### **5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions**

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted in respect of Agenda Item 6.6 (Site at 20 Alton Street). These were considered during discussion of that item.

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Marc Francis, Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, gave their apologies to the meeting. However, Councillor Marc Francis did provide a written update to Cabinet on the meeting the Committee had held earlier that week. The report noted that the Committee had considered a number of issues/reports including:

- A Spotlight session with the Mayor which covered a wide range of issues including education, housing, waste and the environment.
- The latest update of the Children's Safeguarding Improvement Plan
- A discussion on the Council's budget, related consultation exercise and updates on government funding. They also examined the Council's three year budget plan.
- An examination of the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23.

##### **5.2 Any Unrestricted Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Nil items.

#### **6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

##### **6.1 Operation Continuum**

The Mayor and Cabinet were provided with a presentation on the progress and successes of the Council's Operation Continuum campaigns targeting drug dealing and associated criminality.

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities, and Mike Harmer, Metropolitan Police, set out the good work that had been undertaken in the partnership and highlighted the figures which demonstrated the number of arrests, seizures and other actions that had taken place. They explained that the work was not just about making arrests but it was focusing on a more holistic approach to tackling the impact including looking at drug treatment and other underlying causes of drug use. The Cabinet were shown videos of the work of the partnership including raids on suspected drug dealers and community engagement exercises.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and the positive impact the Operation had demonstrated. He explained that this was a major area of focus for the Council as the impact could be seen in many parts of the community. He welcomed the progress but agreed that there was a lot more to do. He was particularly concerned about the potential impact this was having on young people and vulnerable adults.

The **Mayor** thanked all those who were involved for their important contribution to the wellbeing of the borough and he **agreed** the recommendations set out in the report.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To note the report and the progress of Operation Continuum since its implementation in December 2017 to date.
2. To support the continuation of targeted geographic operations to disrupt drug markets in addition to business as usual law enforcement and robust policing.
3. To commend our local Borough Commander, her police officers, those in the Council funded Partnership Task Force and wider partners for their focus to date on this issue and encourage the Metropolitan Police to maintain their corporate commitment to tackling drugs with the full support of all council resources.
4. To endorse the partnership approach and ensure that we continue to build our understanding of drug markets in order to disrupt, dismantle and safeguard our communities and young people from harm.
5. To ensure robust enforcement initiatives like Continuum and targeted communications are incorporated in the future approach to tackling substance misuse problems, crime and offending.

## **6.2 Children's Services Improvement Programme, Quarterly Progress Report (Quarter 2- 2018/19)**

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People, introduced the latest update on the Children's Services Improvement Programme. He highlighted the significant improvements he had seen across the services and the continuing changes that were taking place. In particular he reported on the recently launched Social Work Academy to support new social workers. This was a significant part of the overall work to reduce staff turnover.

He also highlighted a number of other areas of improvement including on ensuring assessments and auditing were properly managed and the work to support vulnerable children and young people. He reported back on the discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and how their feedback would be used when looking at the presentation of future reports.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To endorse the progress made in delivering the children's services improvement programme.
2. To agree the next steps in the improvement journey which would be updated on in the next report.

### **6.3 MTFFS Budget Update 2019-22**

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, provided the Mayor and Cabinet with an update on the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. She reported on the Chancellor's recent budget announcements and confirmed additional funding on winter pressures for one year only. She also updated Members on the Local Government Settlement and the London Business Rates Retention Scheme.

The report provided information on the recent budget consultation exercise undertaken with residents which suggested that residents would like the Council to generate more income and look to create further efficiencies in its operations as ways of supporting the Council's work given the financial pressures the authority was facing.

The **Mayor** noted that the draft budget proposals for 2019-20 would be published before the end of the week. He **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To note the changes to the draft budget position for 2019-2020 and over the MTFFS period 2019-2022.
2. To note the illustrative modelling for the 2019-20 London Business Rates Retention Scheme.
3. To note the decisions of London Councils to participate in the 2019-20 London Business Rates Retention Scheme.
4. To note the options for Council Tax levels over the MTFFS period 2019-2022.
5. To note the analysis and outcomes from the Your Borough Your Future budget consultation in Appendix A and have due regard to the issues raised in finalising its detailed budget proposals.
6. To note the additional resources required over the MTFFS to cover estimated risks and uncertainties.

7. To note proposed increase to tenanted service charges by 3.4% from the first week in April 2019.
8. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment / specific equalities considerations as set out in section 4 of the report.

#### **6.4 Homelessness Scrutiny Review Report and Action Plan**

Councillor Denise Jones, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, introduced the report. She explained that the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee review on homelessness had taken place before the last local elections and she particularly thanked former Councillor Clare Harrisson for leading the review. The work had focussed on health and social care provision for homeless residents.

She took Members through particular issues that were raised in the report including that homeless residents had a life expectancy of 30 years lower than other residents.

She welcomed the recommendations in the report but she also asked the officers take on an additional challenge of looking at how homeless people with pets could be better supported explaining that a pet was often a really important support mechanism for these vulnerable people.

The **Mayor** also welcomed the report and agreed that officers should explore the additional issues around supporting people with pets. Noting that request, he **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. To note the report and to agree the action plan in response to the report recommendations.

#### **6.5 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2023**

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report setting out the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23. He highlighted that this was a cross-London problem and that close partnership working was really important if this issue was to be tackled effectively.

Members noted a number of areas including:

- How the Council was managing to move families out of Bed and Breakfast accommodation within the 6 weeks target.
- The new partnership working with Poplar HARCA to support entrenched rough sleepers.
- The need to promote the private sector as a source of accommodation.
- The links to the wider Housing Strategy.
- The work to support young people leaving care.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report, thanked the Housing Options service for their hard work in very difficult circumstances, and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To approve a draft of the joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 -2023. The draft Strategy is attached at Appendix A to the report.
2. To agree the annual homelessness delivery plan and the annual review of the plan, which will involve taking into account feedback from the Homelessness Partnership Board.

### **6.6 Site at 20 Alton Street E14 6BZ**

The **Mayor** introduced the report on the proposed disposal of the site at 20 Alton Street on a 99 year lease to Lansbury Estate Muslim Association. He explained that the report had now returned to Cabinet following review of questions raised previously.

He noted the concerns raised by Councillor Andrew Wood, Leader of the Conservative Group, in the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions over whether this was an appropriate use of the site and in particular whether the site should be used for housing.

The **Mayor** confirmed his view that provision of community facilities was important.

Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer, advised Members that some of the legal comments which referred to the Council's well-being powers were not required for this specific decision and could be disregarded. The exact deletions would be circulated. This change did not affect the decision to be taken.

[Clerk's Note – the deleted text is set out below]

7.5 The Council's procedure for disposals and lettings specifies that the procedure adopted for disposal is to be determined by the Divisional Director, Property and Major Programmes. Sale by negotiation would usually involve a "Special Purchaser", an example of which is a sitting tenant. This is on the basis that either a negotiated procedure will generate a higher capital receipt or, as is the case here, the Council's well-being powers justify it. ~~The well-being power is satisfied, under the procedure, in circumstances where:~~

7.6 ~~"(a) the Local Authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects in respect of the whole or any part of its area, or of all or any persons resident or present in its area;~~

- ~~i) the promotion or improvement of economic well-being;~~
- ~~ii) the promotion or improvement of social well-being;~~
- ~~iii) the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being; and~~

7.7 ~~(b) the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration for the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000 (two million pounds)".~~

7.8 ~~It should be noted, however, that (b) is not relevant for these purposes as it does not apply to HRA land, nor is the disposal at an undervalue. The disposal by way of negotiation, on the basis of the intended use, is therefore consistent with Council policy.~~

The **Mayor** noted the above comments and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To agree that the site at 20 Alton Street E14 be declared surplus;
2. To agree to the disposal of the site on a 99 year lease to Lansbury Estate Muslim Association at a premium of £402,250;
3. To delegate to the Acting Corporate Director of Place in consultation with the Corporate Director Governance the authority to agree the detailed heads of terms and, thereafter, enter into the legal documentation (including, but not limited to, a development agreement, agreement for lease and lease) in order to give effect to the decision
4. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment / specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1 of the report.
5. To note the result of the further investigations requested in July leading to the decision previously being deferred as set out in paragraph 3.14 of the report.

### **6.7 Withy House Tenant Management Organisation Termination Notice – outcome of independent assessment**

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report. He explained that, following a proposal to serve a termination notice on Withy House Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), an independent assessment had been undertaken. This review was recommending that the TMO continued to provide housing services and that Tower Hamlets Council and Tower Hamlets Homes should continue to provide support and monitoring.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. He thanked officers for their hard work on this and noted that a further audit report on the TMO would be provided at a later date. He **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

**RESOLVED**

1. To agree the recommendations of the Independent Assessor's report appended at Appendix 1 to the report. The Independent Assessor recommends that the TMO continue to provide housing services, and that THH and LBTH continue to provide support and monitor the TMOs implementation of the actions identified by the Independent Assessor.
2. To note specifically the independent assessment made with regard to:
  - The service of the Breach Notice served on 3rd June 2016
  - The service of the Termination Notice dated 4th January 2017
  - The suggested further actions detailed in the Approved Assessors report attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

**6.8 Contracts Forward Plan 2018/19 – Quarter Three**

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report on the Council's Contracts Forward Plan.

She took Members through the report and highlighted the procurement plan set out in Appendix 2 in addition to the list of contracts set out in Appendix 1. She also asked Members to note the community benefits that the individual contracts were looking to deliver.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and **agreed** the recommendations.

**RESOLVED**

1. To note the report and appendices.
2. To confirm that all contracts listed can proceed to contract award after tender.
3. To authorise the Divisional Director - Legal Services to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts referred to at recommendation 2. above
4. To note the procurement forward plan 2018-2022 schedule detailed in Appendix 2.

**6.9 Strategic Plan Performance & Delivery Reporting: Quarter 2 2018/19**

The **Mayor** introduced the latest Strategic Plan Performance and Delivery report. He took Members through the targets, indicators and descriptive information. He welcomed the areas of good performance set out and also noted the challenges that remained.

He then **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

**RESOLVED**

1. To note the summary status as set out at the beginning of the attached monitoring report; and
2. To note the performance of the strategic measures at mid-year, including those measures where the minimum expectation has been missed; and
3. To note progress in delivering Strategic Plan activities at the mid-year point, including those activities that are flagged as delayed and overdue.

**7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

**8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Nil items.

**9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

Nil items.

**10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business**

Nil items.

**10.2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Nil items.

**11. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 7.09 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS