

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2018****THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG****Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Councillor Tarik Khan
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor James King
Councillor Sufia Alam	Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Eve McQuillan
Councillor Shah Ameen	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Puru Miah
Councillor Rachel Blake	Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Kevin Brady	Councillor Victoria Obaze
Councillor Mufedah Bustin	Councillor Kyrsten Perry
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Councillor Leema Qureshi
Councillor Dipa Das	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Dan Tomlinson
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Muhammad Harun	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Danny Hassell	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain	Councillor Val Whitehead
Councillor Asma Islam	Councillor Bex White
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Andrew Wood
Councillor Denise Jones	

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Ayas Miah in the Chair

The Speaker of the Council brought the Council up to date with some of his activities since the previous Council meeting.

He advised that he was very pleased to have hosted and attended a variety of events. This included:

- Citizenship ceremonies and community awards celebrating local achievements.
- Charity events including an anniversary celebration of the Queen Victoria Seaman's Rest and an annual celebration of Blind Aid.
- Welcoming the Mayor of Sylhet City and a talk about Tower Hamlets and the links with Sylhet.
- A visit to RAF Northolt and a tour of the Battle of Britain Bunker.

- Several large civic events, including the Annual Civic Service in Westminster and an event in St. Paul's Cathedral to mark National Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- Meeting Princess Anne at an event to mark the links between the Corporation of Trinity House and the City of London.
- A Diwali celebration event.
- Remembrance ceremonies and fundraising activities, marking 100 years since the end of World War 1. This included: a Service of Remembrance at City Hall, the Remembrance Sunday service at Tower Hill and a special preview of the Shrouds of the Somme.
- A Cadets Parade day.
- Hosting several local Primary Schools in Local Democracy Week, where they had an opportunity to learn about local decision making.
- Welcoming a Plenary Conference of the British – Irish Parliamentary Assembly to Tower Hamlets.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Ruhul Amin
- Councillor Mohammed Pappu

Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillor Rabina Khan

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Amina Ali declared an Interest that must be registered (Other Interests) in agenda item 5.1, a Petition regarding drug dealing and ASB on Three Colt Street and the Thames Path E14.

The following Councillors declared an Interest that must be registered (Other Interests) in agenda item 9.12, a Member question regarding the new financial health centre, operated by THH. This was on the grounds that they were Board Members of Tower Hamlets Homes:

- Councillor Sabina Akhtar
- Councillor Asma Islam
- Councillor Tarik Khan
- Councillor John Pierce

Councillor Ayas Miah declared an Interest that must be registered (Other Interests) in agenda item 9.12, a Member question regarding the new financial health centre, operated by THH. This was on the grounds he was the leaseholder of a Tower Hamlets Homes property

The Monitoring Officer advised that she had granted Councillor Dan Tomlinson a dispensation in respect of Agenda Item 7, Administration Motion regarding Universal Credit for tonight's meeting.

3. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on 19th September 2018 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

The Chief Executive updated the Council on a number of recent developments. He welcomed to the meeting Neville Murton who was now the Acting Corporate Director, Resources. He also reported that Dan Jones, the new Divisional Director for Public Realm, would be joining the Council next week. He thanked Robin Payne for all his work in this role.

He also advised that the Council had been shortlisted for a number of Local Government Awards and would find out in March whether they had been successful.

He also reported that the Council's next Ofsted Visit was due to take place in December and that the Council would also be joined in the same week by the Investors in People assessors.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**5.1 Petition regarding Stop drug dealing and ASB on Three Colt Street and the Thames Path E14**

Petition not presented due to the absence of the petitioner.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community, for a written response within 28 days.

5.2 Petition regarding the disposal of part of Island Gardens.

Ralph Hardwick addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He stated that the Council had provided information to the petitioners and responded to requests for information, showing that East End Homes lawfully owned the site and it was no longer open space at the time of the transfer. The Mayor also stated that, subject to legal advice, he was happy to make further information available.

Regarding the development plans, he hoped that the proposals would include public open space.

RESOLVED:

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

5.3 Petition regarding the rights of EU citizens to vote in local elections.

Spencer Wood and others addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit responded to the matters raised in the petition. She acknowledged the concerns of the petitioners regarding the future rights of EU citizens. She advised that Labour politicians would continue to campaign at all levels to ensure that EU citizens had the right to vote and stand locally.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer for a written response within 28 days.

5.4 Petition Safeguard regarding Palestinian Solidarity

Sybil Cock addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. Whilst recognising the concerns about Israeli/Palestinian relations, he stated that he completely stood by the Council's decision to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Guidelines on Anti-Semitism.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer for a written response within 28 days

Note – during the above item the Speaker adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes at 7:40pm to restore order in the public gallery. The meeting was reconvened at 7:50pm.

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council, referring to his written report circulated, 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, Councillor Andrew Wood, Leader of the Conservative Group, briefly responded to the Mayor's report.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

7 – Administration Motion regarding Universal Credit

Councillor Rachel Blake **moved** and Councillor Dan Tomlinson **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

1. Universal Credit, the new social security payment which replaces 6 other benefits, is currently being rolled out across the country, including Tower Hamlets.
2. That the system and the rollout have been beset by numerous problems leading to real hardship.
3. The problems with Universal Credit are numerous and can have devastating impacts. These include cash flow crises, debt, rent arrears and evictions, and given that Universal Credit payments are made to a single bank account per household, this makes it easier for perpetrators of domestic abuse to control and exploit their victims.
4. That it can take up to 5 weeks before the first payment under Universal Credit is made.
5. That the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) own survey of claimants published on 8th June showed that 40% of claimants are experiencing financial hardship even nine months into a claim and that 20% of claimants are unable to make a claim online.
6. That despite the roll-outs major problems, highlighted in a National Audit Office report (NAO, June 2018), the government sought to undermine it rather than address the very serious concerns it raised.
7. The NAO report also raised concerns that 'it is not clear that Universal Credit will cost less to administer than the existing benefits system.'
8. Tower Hamlets Council submitted written evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee inquiry into Universal Credit last year, on a joint basis with three other London boroughs.
9. The Times reported before the Budget that Esther McVey, Work & Pensions Secretary, confirmed to cabinet colleagues that millions of families could lose £200 per month under Universal Credit.
10. That under Mayor Biggs' Tackling Poverty Fund, £1m has been allocated to support Tower Hamlets residents affected by Universal Credit. This sits alongside a programme of Tackling Poverty work the council is undertaking.
11. Only 46% of respondents to Tower Hamlets own survey reported that they received correct payment from the start and an extraordinary 35% reported that they did not.
12. Tower Hamlets has launched our own Universal Credit Support service which has already started to work with clients who have moved onto UC.

This Council believes:

1. Universal Credit should be stopped completely, and that a genuinely comprehensive system should be introduced in which nobody will be worse off.
2. As the Prime Minister has announced that “austerity is over”, the Chancellor should reverse the cuts to social security.
3. That the Chancellor’s announcement of an extra £1.7bn for Universal Credit work allowances is less than a quarter of the £7bn of welfare cuts planned over the next 5 years.
4. That the social security system is there to support individuals and families in tough times, not to punish them.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Government to stop the roll-out completely and deliver a genuinely comprehensive system in which nobody will be worse off.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

8 – Opposition Motion by the Conservative Group regarding affordable housing in Tower Hamlets

Councillor Andrew Wood **moved** and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Rachel Blake **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded** the following amendment to the motion to be debated as tabled:

Added text underlined
Deleted text scored out.

The Council notes:

The results of the 2018 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey show that the second highest concern for residents was a lack of affordable housing with 37% concerned.

This council further notes:

That the Chancellor Philip Hammond has announced that the Housing Revenue Account cap that controls local authority borrowing for house building will be abolished from 29 October 2018 in England, a welcome move which has long been called for by local authorities.

In response to the scrapping of the cap, Polly Neate, chief executive of homelessness charity Shelter, said: “Scrapping the borrowing cap lays down the gauntlet to local authorities to bring forward home-building plans – no more excuses.”

Polly Neate also wrote this year that ‘our country is in the grip of a worsening housing crisis as homelessness rises, and millions of people struggle to contend with the high-cost and deep insecurity of private renting.’

As well as working with Registered Provider partners to deliver the highest numbers of new affordable homes in the UK over the last 3 years, Tower Hamlets Council has its own ambitious plans to provide 2,000 new council homes.

The majority of our programme to deliver 2,000 new council homes is funded by the use of Right To Buy receipts and borrowing, and the Government's own rules about use of RTB receipts do not allow these receipts to be combined with GLA grant funding within the same property.

It is because of this that the Council only bid for GLA grant for a small proportion of our overall housing programme.

That the Mayor of London on the 23rd October 2018 released £1,029 million of government grants to build new affordable housing in London. Tower Hamlets ~~only~~ received £13 million from the Mayor of London, ~~the fifth lowest number across London Boroughs in a warmly welcomed~~ announcement.

By contrast our five neighbours will each receive:

Newham £107 million
Southwark £89 million
Hackney £45.6 million
Lewisham £37.7 million
Greenwich £32.6 million

~~This is despite Tower Hamlets currently having~~ has the highest housing targets in London (2nd highest targets in London when new London Plan approved)

The government funding, announced in the Government's Budget for 2017, is part of the provision of over £44 billion of new financial support for housing between 2017-18 and 2022-23 although the Budget document and supporting documents themselves clarified that only £15.3bn of this was 'new' money.

That the Government's flagship Housing & Planning Act merely exacerbated the housing crisis, and many of the measures announced within it have been indefinitely delayed or abandoned.

This council further notes:

The Council has committed to building 2,000 new Council homes but and a Council response to an Overview & Scrutiny question ~~defined new council homes as including~~ highlighted that the delivery of new council homes includes:

- The new build programme
- Purchase of s106 properties
- Buy backs of former council homes

- Delivery of modular homes
- Conversion of community buildings for temporary accommodation

~~Also, that mMany residents believe that affordable housing is unaffordable, It is extremely difficult to actually find information on the Councils website to get a full understanding of the different rent levels and service charges so that they have a proper understanding of the actual costs of new affordable housing. and the Mayor's Housing Policy & Affordability Commission looked closely at this issue. Following the Commission, new rent guidance was issued for newly built affordable homes, which means that some families will be nearly £6,000 better off.~~

This Council believes:

~~That the lifting of the HRA cap provides an opportunity to review our affordable housing targets and to build more new homes~~

~~That buying s106 properties already with planning permission or already built former Council homes is not delivering new Council homes (it just changes the ownership of homes being occupied by residents of Tower Hamlets)~~

~~That by competing with housing associations to purchase s106 properties mean less money being spent on new affordable homes within Tower Hamlets as housing associations will instead purchase new homes elsewhere~~

~~That only the delivery of new homes which would not otherwise be built and at affordable prices will deliver what residents need~~

That homes bought from the private market by the Council meet local housing needs and enable us to relocate homeless families out of poorer quality, less secure and more expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation;

That acquiring affordable homes through s106 agreements can accelerate the pace of delivery and ensure that assets are not only retained to meet long term local needs but also deliver revenue returns that are invested locally.

The Council's diverse approach – building new homes on Council land, converting redundant Council buildings into homes, buying homes on the private market, acquiring from developers through s106 agreements – ensures continued delivery across a portfolio of programmes, spreading risk and acting flexibly to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

This Council therefore recommends the following:

1. To increase endorse the current housing targets in the light of the additional funding now available
2. To change recognise the definition of that new Council homes should be called 'new' when a dwelling is now available as a council home where it wasn't immediately previously. to mean new property that would otherwise not be built but still:

- ~~a. Including modular homes like Place Ladywell as a way of speeding up delivery~~
- ~~b. Including converting community buildings which does deliver genuinely new homes
That the definition of new Council homes does not include buying existing homes or those already with planning permission as that does not increase the total stock of homes in Tower Hamlets~~
- ~~3. That in the next round of allocations by the Mayor of London that Tower Hamlets bids for more government grant better reflecting its status as the number one deliverer of new homes in London.~~
4. That the Council will continue to submit to the government a bid for a large slice of the funds available in the Housing Infrastructure Fund from the GLA and MHCLG.
5. To provide residents a better understanding of how affordable housing works and what it actually costs

The amendment was put to the vote and **agreed.**

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

RESOLVED:

The Council notes:

The results of the 2018 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey show that the second highest concern for residents was a lack of affordable housing with 37% concerned.

This council further notes:

That the Chancellor Philip Hammond has announced that the Housing Revenue Account cap that controls local authority borrowing for house building will be abolished from 29 October 2018 in England, a welcome move which has long been called for by local authorities.

In response to the scrapping of the cap, Polly Neate, chief executive of homelessness charity Shelter, said: "Scrapping the borrowing cap lays down the gauntlet to local authorities to bring forward home-building plans – no more excuses."

Polly Neate also wrote this year that 'our country is in the grip of a worsening housing crisis as homelessness rises, and millions of people struggle to contend with the high-cost and deep insecurity of private renting.'

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Hamlets Council has its own ambitious plans to provide 2,000 new council homes.

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The government funding, announced in the Government's Budget for 2017, is part of the provision of over £44 billion of new financial support for housing between 2017-18 and 2022-23 although the Budget document and supporting documents themselves clarified that only £15.3bn of this was 'new' money.

That the Government's flagship Housing & Planning Act merely exacerbated the housing crisis, and many of the measures announced within it have been indefinitely delayed or abandoned.

This council further notes:

The Council has committed to building 2,000 new Council homes but and a Council response to an Overview & Scrutiny question highlighted that the delivery of new council homes includes:

- The new build programme
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- Buy backs of former council homes
- Delivery of modular homes
- Conversion of community buildings for temporary accommodation

Many residents believe that affordable housing is unaffordable, and the Mayor's Housing Policy & Affordability Commission looked closely at this issue. Following the Commission, new rent guidance was issued for newly

built affordable homes, which means that some families will be nearly £6,000 better off.

This Council believes:

That the lifting of the HRA cap provides an opportunity to review our affordable housing targets and to build more new homes

That homes bought from the private market by the Council meet local housing needs and enable us to relocate homeless families out of poorer quality, less secure and more expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation;

That acquiring affordable homes through s106 agreements can accelerate the pace of delivery and ensure that assets are not only retained to meet long term local needs but also deliver revenue returns that are invested locally.

The Council's diverse approach – building new homes on Council land, converting redundant Council buildings into homes, buying homes on the private market, acquiring from developers through s106 agreements – ensures continued delivery across a portfolio of programmes, spreading risk and acting flexibly to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

This Council therefore recommends the following:

1. To endorse the current housing targets in the light of the additional funding now available
2. To recognise that new Council homes should be called 'new' when a dwelling is now available as a council home where it wasn't immediately previously.
3. That the Council will continue to bid for a large slice of the funds available from the GLA and MHCLG.
4. To provide residents a better understanding of how affordable housing works and what it actually costs

9. 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-

9.1 Question from Councillor Asma Islam:

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member set out what the council is doing to encourage more residents to become foster carers, particularly in light of Afia Choudhury winning the 2018 Fostering Network President's Award after being a foster carer with Tower Hamlets for 13 years?

Response of Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People:

This is a particularly important issue to us all as corporate parents as we know that providing enough foster homes for our most vulnerable children and young people helps to give them a chance of having a loving and supporting home and environment. We are all deeply proud of Afia Choudhury's hard work and that her tireless dedication to fostering has been highlighted by this award. As the Mayor said, she is an inspiration who has welcomed over 27 children into her home. Prior to the announcement of Afia's award, we took steps to strengthen and increase our social media activity. Our campaign has resulted in a significant increase in interest over the past 2 months. It has risen from 20 enquiries per month prior to the campaign to 47 enquiries in September and 37 in October.

This activity has also taken place alongside our usual recruitment activities and advertising within our local communities. I can assure you that we will continue to highlight the benefits of fostering and also the positive work of foster carers in our borough.

Supplementary question from Councillor Islam:

Could you also elaborate on what support mechanisms we have in place to support existing foster carers and newly recruited foster carers?

Councillor Hassell's response to the supplementary question:

We provide an excellent range of support to our foster carers. We make sure that their voice is represented through decision making so we have representatives on the Corporate Parenting Board. I know when I speak to many foster carers, and a number of you come from neighbouring boroughs, they really value the support that we provide as a Local Authority. So I would like to pay tribute to our fostering team for all that they do, in that work. We have six different support groups. We provide a £6000 grant funding towards the local TH foster carers association, as well as providing annual memberships to fostering networks for members who foster for us. This enables them to get the peer support that they need. We run a mentoring scheme and we are recruiting and training experienced carers as part of that and we pay the mentors for that work.

9.2 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood:

Given that the Council recently signed the "Violence Against Women and Girls Charter" why did the Council choose not to inform nearby female residents of the threat of sexual assaults from a lone male on Blackwall Way although it did send an internal warning message to its own staff?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities:

Tower Hamlets Police have their own communication channels that they use to promote a warning to the public about incidents in a specific area. Given the sensitivities of police investigations, the council relies on the police partnership communications on this incident and we work closely with them.

The decision regarding the timing and extent to which the public were informed of this crime was an operational policing decision that was made by a Detective Chief Inspector who was fully consulted in the drafting of this particular response. The police launched an appeal for information which resulted in regional and local media coverage which many of our residents would have seen. A suspect has since been arrested.

As for why we chose to inform staff, when police published the warning on its channels, we took the decision to notify our staff internally.

Supplementary question from Councillor Wood:

You have 15,000 people following your twitter feed. You have thousands of people on your Facebook page. So the question is why did you not repeat that police warning on your own communication channels, when we gave coverage to Rod Liddle's stupid and obnoxious remark in the Sunday Times. Was that more important than actually sharing this warning message with our residents?

Councillor Begum's response to the supplementary question:

It is an operational policing decision and it is not practical for the council to put out messages by partners on our channels which reach residents across the whole of Tower Hamlets and beyond. In addition, we need to be mindful to not compromise ongoing investigations and when it was appropriate, the Police sent out a message.

9.3 Question from Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE:

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm to me who the new developer planning to develop Bishopsgate Goodsyard is and when local residents may have opportunities to raise their concerns?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

The planning applicant is a joint venture between Hammerson Plc and Ballymore. The planning application was called in by the former Mayor of London in 2015. GLA officers have recommended refusal of the current proposals but the application was not determined and was instead deferred for further amendments to address the reasons for refusal.

The Mayor of London remains the planning authority for this application.

Amended proposals are currently out for public consultation. We have been very keen to advise the developer of who they should be working with, where they should be carrying out consultation events, and linking them up to community networks. In addition, Tower Hamlets and Hackney Council planning teams are working with the GLA to provide feedback on the amended proposals and we anticipate that amended plans will be formally submitted to the GLA in early 2019. A representation hearing for the Mayor of London to make a final decision is expected to take place next summer

Supplementary question from Councillor Mukit:

Given the commitment by the Executive Mayor regarding social housing, what level of social housing will be provided?

Councillor Blakes' response to supplementary question:

The previous application was submitted with appalling low levels of affordable housing. I think they started off at just 5% and this was completely thrown out by Local Authority planning officers. Sadiq Khan, the Labour Mayor of London has established a policy where he expects a minimum threshold of 35% affordable housing, and that is certainly what we will be pushing in our representations.

9.4 Question from Councillor Peter Golds:

Why did Tower Hamlets only receive £13 million of the £1,029 million government grant allocated to London Boroughs by the Mayor of London to build new affordable homes despite currently having the highest housing targets in London?

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

Firstly I would like to welcome the news that the Mayor of London has agreed plans worth over £1 billion to deliver 11,000 badly needed Council homes across London. I am also delighted that Tower Hamlets received £13 million to deliver 675 homes in the Borough. In addition, Tower Hamlets has delivered the most homes in the UK. We have ambitious plans to provide 2000 new Council homes and we are investing into providing temporary homes for homeless families, I would also like to remind Councillor Golds that the majority of our programme to deliver 2000 new Council homes is funded by the use of right to buy receipts and borrowing. The Government's own rules prevent the use of right to buy receipts combined with GLA grant funding for the same property. It is because of this that the Council only bid for GLA grant for a small proportion of the overall housing programme. The GLA grant will be used to provide 130 one bed flats making maximum use of the funding per property combined with HRA borrowing. The rest of the Council's programme will be funded by right to buy receipts and further borrowing. I look forward to Councillor Golds setting out his party's vision for housing in this Borough.

Supplementary question from Councillor Golds:

You have asked me about my party's vision, I have two points: the last government to deliver an enormous amount of social housing was that under John Major. When the Labour Government came in, they capped the social housing numbers. On the issue of Newham getting £107 million and Tower Hamlets getting far less, do you think there is a chance that Labour Members and activists could consult with the Mayor of Newham to discuss how they got that £107 million, and we only received £13million.

Councillor Islam's response to supplementary question:

I have already explained the reason why we applied for this smaller amount of money, because we do have quite an ambitious housing programme within our own resources. I welcome that Newham secured this extra amount of money and a Labour Council are showing this ambition and delivering more and more social housing for Londoners.

9.5 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze:

What is the council doing to help and support EU citizens in Tower Hamlets before and after Brexit?

Response of Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit:

The Council has set up the Brexit Commission and has also started to prepare our own contingency plans in the event of a deal or no deal. The Brexit Commission work has included some roadshows on EU settlement rights, following Brexit. We have so far delivered two roadshows for the community and new residents. The first was held in the Whitechapel Idea Store, where we held stores from relevant organisations and specialist EU solicitors and offered advice to around 60-70 residents and a small number of non-residents who came to seek advice. Our second roadshow was held in Canary Wharf where two colleagues from the Council handed out information, guidance and leaflets from the Home Office, to those who are interested. We are planning our third roadshow in the Isle of Dogs and a further one in Mile End in the coming months. We also have an on line form on our website where residents can share their concerns. Finally the Brexit Commission report will also shed light on the support that EU residents will require. The report will be launched in mid February 2019

Supplementary question from Councillor Obaze:

How will the Council ensure that EU citizens in our Borough will not face any discrimination on their entitlements after the EU Brexit?

Councillor Ali's response to the supplementary question:

We will continue our roadshows offering advice to EU Citizens in Tower Hamlets. We will be lobbying central government and the GLA. We will also be campaigning on issues that affect Tower Hamlets residents after Brexit as and when they occur.

9.6 Question from Councillor Kahar Chowdhury:

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member please update members on how the Tackling Poverty Fund is being used?

Response of Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

The tackling poverty fund is being used to pay for our Crisis and Support scheme, which will be re launched in the beginning of December, to make sure that we provide additional support to residents and ensure they are getting all the services they possibly can through our new scheme. We talked about this evening our Resident Support Outreach Team. In which Universal Credit advisors are in GP's surgeries and in community centres supporting people who are going through the misery of moving on to Universal Credit. We have established a £200,000 Innovation Fund to support partners to test innovative ways of tackling poverty.

Supplementary question from Councillor Chowdhury:

Owing to the cuts and coupled with the increasing demands for services, it is conceivable that the allocated fund will be fully used. Therefore, do we have a contingency plan to top it up?

Councillor Blake's response to the supplementary question:

Currently our funds for this programme have been drawn out of reserves and I very much hope that we will consider continuing certainly the residents support scheme and the crisis fund, as we go into our budget setting programme.

9.7 Question from Councillor Sufia Alam:

What were the outcomes from the Violent Crime Summit and how will it shape the council's work going forward?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities:

The Violent Crime Summit was held on 21st September 2018. It was a useful conversation and we heard from various individuals and organisations about the concerns of the community, voluntary sector groups, and professionals about violence in the borough.

We need our police, council, voluntary sector, schools and youth services to work effectively together through a multi-agency approach.

A number of priorities were identified and are being developed into a 'Statement for Action' that will be publicised, and I'll make sure that councillors receive this as well.

The Community Safety Partnership and public health partners are also developing a public health approach to look at long term prevention.

We are also developing an integrated approach with the co-location of police gangs team, exploitation team, Children' services, commissioned gang workers and others.

Drug related crime is rooted in complex issues and there is no quick fix for it. However we are making progress with our partnership work and the Violent Crime Summit was a really useful step.

No supplementary question was asked

9.8 Question from Councillor Dan Tomlinson:

To ask the Mayor/Cabinet for an update on our use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). In particular, how many PSPO areas we have in the borough and if we have any plans to add more in the years ahead?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities:

Tower Hamlets currently has four Public Spaces Protection Orders. There is a Borough wide PSPO, a PSPO in Brick Lane, Ropemakers Fields and Kings Arms Court. The first is the Borough wide PSPO which is for responsible drinking. The PSPO in Brick Lane is in regards to serious and persistent anti-social behaviour. The Ropemakers Fields PSPO is in regards to a cracking down on large groups. The Kings Arms Court PSPO is due to a busy pedestrian footpath. Since the Brick Lane PSPO, we have issued between April to September 2018, 17 fixed penalty notices and for the same period in the Borough wide PSPO, we have issues 37 Fixed Penalty notices

Supplementary question from Councillor Tomlinson:

Do we have plans to introduce more PSPO's at the moment?

Councillor Begum's response to the supplementary question:

Currently given these orders can be restrictive in terms of what people can do and how they behave in public spaces, it is important that the restriction that is imposed is focused. So we don't have any more PSPO's in train, but it will be a tool we will be using if it's required.

9.9 Question from Councillor Kyrsten Perry:

November is “safeguarding” month and currently one in three women and girls experience gender violence in their life time. Therefore, I wanted to ask about why the Violence Against Women and Girls Charter has been developed and what it aims to achieve?

Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities:

The VAWG Charter sets out Tower Hamlets Council’s commitment to tackling gender based violence. Our strategy is to ensure support and protection for victims, enforce action against perpetrators and work with communities to raise awareness and challenge gender-based violence.

The Charter was signed by Cabinet late last month and marks our ongoing commitment to services with the potential to save lives. It outlines our offer of practical support, like the Sanctuary Scheme to improve the security of a victim’s home and it promises ongoing work with children who live with domestic abuse. The charter provides an additional commitment to lobby the Government to make misogyny a hate crime.

It further aims to promote awareness around VAWG and the services are available within Borough to those experiencing VAWG

Supplementary question from Councillor Perry:

Will the work such as the outcomes of the charter be reviewed?

Councillor Begum’s response to the supplementary question:

We have come to the end of our consultation for our Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, which has now been prepared and I will be looking at the draft. We will also be refreshing the charter as well next year.

9.10 Question from Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain:

Can the cabinet member please update me on the work of the Brexit Commission?

Response of Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit:

The Commission was launched in September 2018, since then we have been gathering evidence and drafting the report of our steering group. Alongside the data collected and the analysis for the report, we have organised some community events and road shows that have been taking place up and down the Borough. Regarding the Commission’s work we have held two oral evidence sessions. One on the public services and the other on the local economy. Both of which secured local media coverage. We are planning our

third and final oral evidence session to be held on 27 November on the civil society.

No supplementary question was asked.

9.11 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin:

What is the process and timings for the Master Plan for the parks on the south of the Isle of Dogs?

Response of Councillor Amina Ali, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit:

The development of the master plan is the first stage of work, looking at improving the offer to the public in terms of the facilities and linkages in the open space on the Isle of Dogs. A brief is currently being developed which sets out our objectives, which are broadly to secure the improvement and the refurbishment of facilities in the three open spaces, and linkages between them. We will also be inviting bids from experienced, suitable and qualified master plan teams, to produce a deliverable master plan for the long-term and improvement of the three open spaces. This will include an analysis of the spaces and consultation with local stakeholders and an investigation of a number of options. The brief will be submitted for bid in 2019 with an anticipation of a completion date in June 2019.

Supplementary question from Councillor Bustin:

Will councillors and residents be able to contribute to the consultation?

Councillor Ali's response to the supplementary question:

There will be room for consultation with local stakeholders, which is key to us, and I look forward to working with you as part of that consultation.

9.12 Question from Councillor Ehtasham Haque:

How will the new financial health centre, operated by THH, benefit residents?

Response of Councillor Candida Ronald Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector:

The growing pressure from the ever-increasing welfare reform and the rollout of Universal Credit across Tower Hamlets has seen a large number of residents experiencing greater poverty and more financial exclusion. In this current climate, there is a greater need for support and training in financial matters. In response to this, THH has developed the Borough's first Financial Health Centre. Residents can book appointments or drop in any weekday to receive advice and support on debt; welfare benefits; universal credit; money management; training; job searching; disability matters and more. Since the centre's launch on 17th September our advisors have supported over 300 people, £140,000 worth of debt have been consolidated and over £210,00

worth of benefits have been applied for. 65 residents have been helped with employment and training advice and 11 people have secured jobs as a result.

Supplementary question from Councillor Haque:

It is good to see THH doing their bit to help the residents. Are any other housing associations providing similar services and do you think they should do so?

Councillor Ronald's response to the supplementary question:

I know that some Housing Associations are doing similar sorts of things and I hope that the success of this one will show that this is something that their residents need.

9.13 Question from Councillor Puru Miah:

Does the lead member acknowledge the concerns ordinary residents of Mile End have over the proposed TFL North South Cycle Route, in particular the adverse impact anticipated on the Burdett/Mile End Road junction?

Response of Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment

The Mayor, Council Officers and I are aware of the concerns people have about the impact of the proposed North South Cycle Route on local accessibility. We are working closely with Transport for London to make sure that residents access is maintained and at measures in regards to rat runs as clearly they are a problem for local residents as well. We also want to provide opportunities for improving pedestrian safety as well as encouraging more cycling. We all know that air pollution in this Borough is a real problem and the extent that cycling can help with addressing that, is something we should welcome. So positive conversations are taking place about the reinstatement of the right turn from Burdett Road, which was closed by TfL some time ago. The design work continues and outline plans will come forward and further public consultation will take place in May 2019.

Supplementary question from Councillor Miah:

Does the Lead Member acknowledge that the local campaign with regards to the no right turn and the anger and concerns is not in regards of the cycle route but more towards the fact that residents feel that they have been ignored by TfL with regards to the no right turn. As I look towards the Conservative Councillors, the message from the residents of Mile End is the Burdett and Mile End Road junction is for turning.

Councillor Edgar's response to the supplementary question:

It is clearly the case that the Council (Officers, the Mayor, ward Councillors) have worked really hard to try and persuade TfL that they do need to think again about this right turn. I think that some progress has been made, but I do think that we need to make sure that when they come forward with the

detailed proposals about how they are going to respond to the concerns that all of the knock on effects are also thought through. So we don't end up with a change that simply creates a new set of problems in a different place. We need to really press TfL into thinking very carefully about any changes that they make in response to the pressure that we have been applying.

9.14 Question from Councillor Shah Ameen:

Would the lead member agree, that the recent application by the Police for Closure Order for the ASB behaviour in the communal areas of Delafield House, and Berner North Estate, is a step in the right direction to the ongoing problems of drugs and ASB in Whitechapel?

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

Closure Orders are one of several powers introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. This Order is normally valid for three months and one extension can be obtained at court provided there is evidence of an ongoing problem.

It is never a one size fits all approach and the council and police will adopt appropriate tactics and powers on a case by case basis. However based on previous experience at other locations Tower Hamlets Homes ASB Team have observed an almost instant reduction in drug-related ASB when the Partial Premises Closure Orders were put in place.

Because it is a temporary measure, this is why it must and will be used as an effective short term measure to bring respite to residents whilst continuing to work with police and other partners in housing and support services to solve the issues on a longer term basis. A key challenge once an order is obtained is monitoring compliance. The investment in police resources funded by the Mayor is key to supporting this activity.

Supplementary question from Councillor Ameen:

Thank you Councillor Islam for working to make our estates a safer place. It has given a positive impact on the current Administration. Do you have any feedback on what our residents feel about the closure orders?

Councillor Islam's response to the supplementary question:

Nothing formal, but anecdotally I think that residents have taken it positively. I will give you an example, when the Police Sergeant was putting up the closure order signs in Delafield House, a child asked what the Police Officer was doing. When he explained, the reaction of the boy was thank you very much and at least I can walk safely to my home now.

Questions 9.15 and 9.16 were not put due to lack of time. A Written response would be provided to the questions. (Note the written responses are included in Appendix A to these minutes)

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

10.1 Report from Audit Committee: Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2018/19

The Council considered a report from the Audit Committee setting out the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2018/19. The Council noted that recommendation 2 on the cover report should read £447.62m.

RESOLVED:

That the Council notes:

1. That the treasury management activities and performance against targets for the half year ending 30 September 2018; and
2. The Council's investments as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The balance outstanding as at 30 September 2018 was £447.62m which includes £10m pension fund cash awaiting investment.

11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

11.1 –Motion regarding Remaining Local Authority Day Nurseries

Councillor Peter Golds **moved** and Councillor Andrew Wood **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Danny Hassell **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the following amendment to the motion to be debated as tabled:

Added text underlined.

Deleted text scored out.

This council notes that there has been considerable concern amongst both members and residents regarding the closure of the three remaining Local Authority Day Nurseries, namely; John Smith, Overland and Mary Sambrook. We further note that a public consultation was held on the proposals which attracted 592 responses, 53% of which were in favour of the proposal to close the Local Authority Day Nurseries, and that there are clearly diverse views on this matter.

The council further notes that the call-in members expressed concern in their call-in requisition that

“no ‘other operators’ were considered as providers to run the three LADNs” though notes that this statement was disputed by council officers.

In addition, the members highlighted the alternatives presented to the Schools Forum all resulted in closure of the three nurseries although again this followed an earlier decision from the Schools Forum which made clear their intention to withdraw funding from the LADNs.

In addition, the call-in members suggest that the result of the decision will result in a 'depreciation of service' for service users and is therefore in contrast to what was agreed by full council in 2017 but note that this is not accepted by the leadership and particularly that the Mayor has stated he plans to bring forward new proposals for Early Years initiatives as part of the forthcoming Budget process which will have a wider positive impact for local residents and that there will be no reduction in early years places and that it is proposed that a number of pilot initiatives will be developed following the imminent early years summit.

The council notes that whilst the Mayor has responsibility for Executive decisions, members retain certain responsibilities as to the budget.

Constitution - 4.02 Functions of Council

Only Council will exercise the following functions:

(b) approving or adopting the policy framework and the budget;

The council also notes the letter from the former Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer which explicitly set out that despite claims to the contrary the decision regarding the LADNs was for the Executive not the council, and that this was both clarified in writing to O&S before and again after the call-in.

~~Therefore,~~ The Council believes that despite this being an Executive decision, ~~in this case there are budgetary implications and therefore~~ the decision to proceed should be debated by full council has, by consideration of this motion, been debated and enabled enabling members to invite the Mayor to explain the situation to full council and in light of the council debate whether to proceed with the closures.

The amendment was put to the vote and **agreed**.

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

RESOLVED:

This council notes that there has been considerable concern amongst both members and residents regarding the closure of the three remaining Local Authority Day Nurseries, namely; John Smith, Overland and Mary Sambrook. We further note that a public consultation was held on the proposals which attracted 592 responses, 53% of which were in favour of the proposal to close the Local Authority Day Nurseries, and that there are clearly diverse views on this matter.

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The Council believes that despite this being an Executive decision, the decision to proceed should be debated by full council and has, by consideration of this motion, been debated and enabled members to invite the Mayor to explain the situation to full council and in light of the council debate whether to proceed with the closures.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 10.00 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

APPENDIX A – WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS THAT WERE NOT PUT AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING (21 NOVEMBER 2018)

9.15 Question from Councillor Tarik Khan:

Will the gas holders in St. Peter's be protected under the Tower Hamlets local plan?

Response from Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor for Regeneration and Air Quality.

The gasholders are not listed but are located in a designated conservation area (Regents Canal Conservation area) and the detailed policy guidance specific to this is set out in the Regents Canal Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan, November 2009. The appraisal acknowledges the importance that the gasholders play within the conservation area.

The wording of the design principles for Marian Place Gas Works and The Oval reflect this emphasis as it states that development is expected to 'retain, reuse and enhance the existing heritage assets including no.2 and no. 5 gasholders'.

Parts 2, 3 and 4 of Policy S.DH3 set out the requirements of developments that affect a Conservation Area. Given that the gasholders fall within the conservation area, any application for development affecting them would need to meet those policy requirements.

9.16 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Why did LBTH under Mayor Biggs secure only 13 million pounds of grant funding for housing from the GLA and could he clarify the number of 1,2 and 3 bedrooms that he bid for?

Response from Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor for Regeneration and Air Quality.

Firstly I would like to warmly welcome the news that the Mayor of London has agreed plans worth over £1bn to deliver 11,000 badly needed council homes across London – and I'm also delighted that Tower Hamlets will be receiving £13m to support the delivery of 675 homes in our borough. We should also celebrate that this funding from the Mayor of London is getting Councils across London building Council Homes, a programme that we started in 2015.

Here in Tower Hamlets: we've delivered the highest numbers of affordable homes in the UK; we've got ambitious plans to provide 2,000 new council homes; and we're investing millions in temporary accommodation for the homeless.

The majority of our programme to deliver 2,000 new council homes is funded by the use of Right To Buy receipts and borrowing, and the Government's own rules about use of RTB receipts do not allow these receipts to be combined with GLA grant funding within the same property.

It is because of this that the Council only bid for GLA grant for a small proportion of our overall housing programme.

The GLA grant will be used to build 130 one-bedroom flats (making use of the maximum available £100,000 grant per property, combined with HRA borrowing).

The rest of the Council's programme will be funded by RTB receipts and further borrowing.

We continue to have one of the largest affordable housing outputs in London.