Non-Executive Report of the: **COUNCIL** 18 September 2019	TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	**Classification:** Unrestricted
Motions submitted by Members of the Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1.   Five motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 18th September 2019

2.   The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the motions alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups, with the Opposition Group motions starting with the largest Political Group not to have that meeting's Opposition Motion Debate slot.

3.   Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.

4.   There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS
Set out overleaf is the motions that have been submitted.

12.1 Motion regarding cyberbullying and e-safety

Proposer: Councillor Asma Islam
Seconder: Councillor Danny Hassell

This Council Notes:

1.   Bullying and cyberbullying are two of the most serious issues facing children's and young people's lives.
2.   Research undertaken by the NSPCC has found:
        a.   almost 1 in 4 of 8 to 11-year-olds and 3 in 4 of 12 to 15-year-olds has a social media profile;
        b.   1 in 3 internet users are children;
        c.   1 in 4 children have experienced something upsetting on a social networking site;
        d.   around 1 in 8 young people have been bullied on social media;
        e.   3 in 4 parents have looked for or received information or advice about how to help their child manage online risks;
        f.   almost 1 in 4 young people have come across racist or hate messages online; and
        g.   there were over 2,200 counselling sessions with young people who talked to Childline about online sexual abuse online in 2017/18
3.   There are many forms of cyber-bullying including harassment, denigration, flaming, impersonation, outing and trickery, cyber-stalking, exclusion, bullying by spreading rumours and gossip, threatening behaviour, blackmail and grooming.
4.   Some of the triggers found in young victims include; low self-esteem, withdrawal from social activities, changes in appearance, weight loss, depression and even self-harm.
5.   It is currently impossible to know how many children are reporting content, what they are reporting and how these reports are dealt with.
6.   The recommendation of the Children's Commissioner to establish a Children's Digital Ombudsman to media between under 18s and social media companies over the removal of content.
7.   That parents, educators, and counsellors across UK are responding to this behaviour with new and innovative approaches.
8.   Here in Tower Hamlets the council's Parental Engagement Team has developed workshops and courses which explore internet safety. More than 200 parents and carers have attended a course or workshop delivered in school and community settings in 2018 – 19. The PET has also recruited and trained 8 Safer Families Champions to promote key safeguarding messages to families.
9.   Digital inclusion, including e-safety for young people is a strand in the Local Community Fund.

This Council Believes:

1.   The impact of cyber-bullying and exposure to other inappropriate content online is a threat to a child's safety and wellbeing and if they are not handled swiftly it can cause long-term psychological damage that can affect everything from their personal relationships to their performance in school.
2.   That in a digital age, the internet has significant advantages for young people future but that the disadvantages should not out weight the advantages.
3.   Enabling children and young people to use technology safely is also about tackling wider issues related to safeguarding, such as reducing exposure to violent and other inappropriate content.

4.   That the Tower Hamlets schools that have developed cyber bullying policies and advocated safe online policies, including comprehensive reporting procedures, are to be congratulated and supported.

This Council Resolves:

1.   To annually recognise the third Friday in June as the international 'Stop Cyberbullying Day' and to use this to raise awareness, working with organisations including the Cybersmile Foundation.
2.   To use the council's website and other communication channels, including through the youth services and Young WorkPath to promote organisations and services available that offer support to young people suffering from cyberbullying.
3.   To support local schools to strengthen their own policies on cyberbullying and their reporting procedures for both teachers and young people.
4.   To continue to support and strengthen our work with parents so they are empowered to support young people to stay safe online.
5.   To support the proposal from the Children's Commissioner to establish a Children's Digital Ombudsman.

12.2 Motion regarding Transport in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds
Seconder: Councillor Andrew Wood

This Council notes:

- That the Council is consulting on a draft Transport Strategy 2019-2041
- That the Bow Liveable Street week-long road closure trial was ended prematurely on its first day
- That a bus gate will be introduced in Wapping following a public consultation

That the GLA forecast the population in the Borough to increase from 328,043 people in 2019 to 400,382 by 2041, an increase of 72,339 people or 22%. Mostly in the extremities of Tower Hamlets.

In addition, the GLA plans another 50,500 jobs in the City Fringe Opportunity Area plus another 110,000 jobs in the Isle of Dogs & South Poplar Opportunity Area. That there is planning permission for buildings to house an additional 37,500 jobs at Canary Wharf already.

We also note substantial developments to the east in Newham, south In Lewisham and Greenwich as well as at Canada Water which affect transport options within Tower Hamlets.

That the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework and the accompanying TfL OAPF Transport Strategy (both started in 2014) is still incomplete nine months after it was meant to be finalised.

That unlike the Royal Docks and Old Oak Common Opportunity Areas the GLA has chosen not to commit teams to help support growth in Tower Hamlets.

This Council notes as regards the Transport Strategy:

That the transport strategy does not mention a number of key transport issues or only in passing, it does not deal with issues raised in its own evidence base, for example bus capacity constraints on a number of key routes. For example, the word river appears only once, the word ferry does not appear at all despite both being important elements of the transport mix. That there is no analysis of the budgeted increases in DLR capacity. No comment about the proposed Canary Wharf to Euston private underground railroad. No comment about what happens after the delivery of the Elizabeth line which would still not be sufficient to support planned office growth in Tower Hamlets according to major businesses in the area.

That the Councils Transport strategy has this comment "*Areas such as the City Fringe and Whitechapel have very good access whilst parts of Leamouth and the Isle of Dogs have lower access to public transport services. There are areas with low PTAL scores and less good access, for example Lansbury Ward, which also have high levels of deprivation.*

That the Councils Local Plan plans to put a disproportionate number of new homes in those areas with lower access to public transport services.

This Council notes as regards the Wapping bus gate decision:

That in the Wapping bus gate consultation, that the Council asked five key questions about the proposed bus gate.
That the consultation had a record 2,370 responses, 1,528 from within the ward itself.

That despite this record response, the Council decided to implement options which had the least public support from residents in the ward itself:

- Q3. What time should the bus gate be in operation? Only 4% within the ward picked the eventual option of weekday, morning and afternoon closures
- Q4. Who should be allowed through the bus gate? That only 22% picked the eventual option, cyclist's and buses only
- Q6. Should taxis be allowed? Only 26% picked the option to ban taxis

That only on the location of the bus gate and banning mopeds/motorcycles did residents preferences match the final Council decision.

That it is unclear who and why decided to ignore resident's preferences as expressed in this survey.

This Council notes as regards the Bow Liveable Streets trial:

That press reports issued after the closure of the Bow Liveable Streets trial had this headline
"Bow road closure trial cut short after aggressive behaviour from people opposed to plan"

That no arrests nor reports of Police intervention were made, that social media comments and videos from the protests suggested passion but not aggressive behaviour.

That the Council has not yet issued a report on what happened on that day

That many people in Bow said they were not aware of the road closure and did not feel consulted.

Finally, this Council notes as regards cycling:

That the Tower Hamlets Council Annual Residents Survey 2019 shows that cycling frequency in Tower Hamlets, shows a decline in the % that cycle Frequently (weekly /daily) from 9% in 2017 down to 5% in 2019. And that the % that cycle Occasionally (less often) dropped from 13% to 12%.

Despite nearly two-thirds of residents agreeing that Tower Hamlets is a cycle friendly borough (64 per cent) with around a quarter (24 per cent) disagreeing. Although this has dropped by 10% since 2017.

The Council Recommends:

To produce a Strategy document which is a strategy for Transport issues in the whole of Tower Hamlets not just a wish list of desired outcomes

To produce a Transport strategy that clearly covers the full range of transport options, that deals with growth and makes clear our expectations of what we required from the

GLA, TfL and central government.

Not to blame residents for its failings, unless there is clear & documented evidence to the contrary

To publish publicly the report on what happened with the Bow Liveable Streets trial.

To work with all affected residents on any changes to roads or transport, to respect all resident's views not just those it already agrees with

Not to consult residents if it has no intention of adopting resident's opinions if they differ from the Councils, it destroys trust

That if the Council does choose to ignore the majority of resident's views that it needs to be much clearer on why and who decided not to follow resident's recommendations as expressed in a survey

12.3 Motion regarding Improving diversity and inclusion in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Mufeedah Bustin
Seconder: Councillor Kyrsten Perry

Tower Hamlets is a rich and diverse borough. The 2018 election increased the diversity of our elected representatives, by gender and by ethnicity, further reflecting the make-up of our borough.

This council notes:

1.   Diverse teams provide great benefits. This includes at a senior level where the knowledge, skills and experiences of people from different backgrounds is vital: complex challenges require multi-faceted solutions.
2.   Diversity alone does not achieve success. Meaningful diversity, not tokenism, should be the aim. Inclusion creates a culture of openness and opportunity; diversity is an indicator of the success of inclusion programmes.
3.   There are many barriers to inclusion and often organisational and societal structures will unintentionally prevent the progression of under-represented groups.

This council further notes:

1.   That diversity in senior management across local government nationally leaves much to be desired. According to the Local Government Leadership report produced by Green Park in October 2018 only two of London's 32 Boroughs have BAME CEOs. Progress has been made in the representation of BAME people at Top 20 level in London Boroughs with an increase of 5.6% in 2017 to 10.5%. in 2018. Local authorities outside London average about 3%.
2.   That the gender pay gap and the underrepresentation of women needs to be properly addressed; a significant gap still exists across the UK.
3.   Research from the Fawcett Society highlights that of the council seats across the country that were up for election in 2018, 38% went to women, up just 3 percentage points on 2014 when these seats were last contested.
4.   Improving diversity and inclusion takes time. Best practice factors include:
        a.   Delivering training to decision makers and across the organisation
        b.   Recruitment adverts that look for a range of experiences, not those traditionally filled by white men.
        c.   Recruitment processes e.g. gender-neutral job ads; skills/competencies over experiences; blind CVs; diverse recruitment panels;
        d.   Mentoring/coaching/training for talented individuals
        e.   Promotion opportunities including safe environments for individuals to learn new skills and experiences

5.   Tower Hamlets Council publishes data on the gender pay gap, as well as data in relation to the pay gap for other protected characteristics: BAME staff; staff with disabilities; and LGBT staff.

This council recognises the efforts made by this council to improve inclusion. However, we acknowledge that leadership roles across London and across our council and partners in the community often lacks the diversity that we wish to see. In 2019, we need to see a bigger step change.

This council wishes to see the same requirement extended to partners and suppliers where there is no statutory impediment.

This council believes we should be encouraging our local government colleagues across London, and our partners and community groups locally to improve inclusion by having senior management teams that reflect the diversity of our borough and city. This council welcomes the addition of a question asking about the existence and effectiveness of applicants' diversity and inclusion policies in the Local Community Fund application. This council wishes to see a movement towards a model where such an improvement in inclusion becomes a key consideration in appointments and funding (where there is no statutory impediment in doing so).

This council resolves:

1. To annually request a range of inclusion statistics from partner organisations and funded community groups, with a focus on how inclusion is to be improved at a leadership level. The intention initially is that this is signals the importance of inclusion to the borough. The level and detail should vary depending on the size of the group.
2. To produce a plan to make diversity and inclusion key decision factors (focusing on senior management) in appointing suppliers and issuing grants. The plan should cover the medium-long term and consider how this can be achieved in line with procurement rules.
3. To lead by example and review the council's own recruitment processes and development & training programmes to improve diversity and inclusion at a senior management level.
4. To require any headhunters/recruitment consultants to demonstrate how they will address diversity during the recruitment process and demonstrate how they address diversity in their own organisation.
5. To call on the Mayor of Tower Hamlets in his role at London Councils to push for the establishment of development programmes for BAME senior managers in London Local Government in order to address the current under-representation at senior level.
6. That the above should be reflected in the annual equalities workforce monitoring report action plan where applicable.

12.4 Motion regarding London City Airport

Proposer: Councillor Val Whitehead
Seconder: Councillor Ehtasham Haque

Tower Hamlets Council recognises the high impact of any increase in air traffic on carbon emissions and also on the lives of those who live in the flight path or will lose their homes to airport expansion. Following our earlier recognition of a Climate Emergency we therefore oppose the expansion proposals at Heathrow and the proposed increase in the number of flights allowed at City Airport and any extension to its hours of operation.

As an eco-friendly alternative to increased flights, Tower Hamlets residents have easy access to multiple railway stations and we believe the government should work to increase access and decrease the cost of rail travel for all.

We also believe that the concentration of flight paths from City Airport in 2016, which has a disproportionate effect on those affected, is unfair and should be reversed.

The council must ensure that it submits a formal response to the London City Airport Master Plan 2020-2035 consultation, including a copy of this motion in the response, and ensuring that residents are engaged in the consultation process.

12.5 Motion regarding Serious Case Review of Radicalisation of BGA Schoolgirls

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

The Council Notes:

- To date, Tower Hamlets Council's Local Safeguarding Children's Board has failed to undertake a serious case review of the circumstances surrounding the radicalisation and handling of the Bethnal Green Academy schoolgirls (Sharmeena Begum, Shamima Begum, Amira Abase and Kadiza Sultana) who travelled to Syria to join ISIS.

A letter to the Rt Hon Sajid Javid from Shamima Begum's family solicitor claims the following:

- In March 2015, the DfE announced that experts from its due diligence and counter-extremism division would review possible links to extremism at BGA, yet no findings have been made public
- The police questioned seven of Sharmeena's friends from BGA without the knowledge or consent of their parents and that, allegedly, consent letters given to the girls were not delivered to their parents. Neither the police, nor BGA contacted their parents
- It is alleged that the Met Police attempted to stop the families from receiving legal advice
- None of the BGA girls were referred to Prevent, the government's anti-radicalisation programme
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 contains a duty on specified authorities (local authorities, education providers, health sector, police, prisons) to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This is the origin of the 'Prevent' strategy
- Shamima Begum's family lawyer, Tasnime Akunjee, has also questioned what failures took place that allowed teenage girls to evade the police and security services and make their way into a terrorist-occupied territory

The Council Further Notes:

- In December 2014, during Luftur Rahman's administration, Sharmeena Begum was the first schoolgirl who travelled to Syria. It is reported that her father, Mohammed Uddin, was so concerned about her friends he informed the police and school to keep an eye on her friends
- In February 2015, Sharmeena's friends Amira Abase, 15, Shamina Begum, 15, and Kadiza Sultana, 16, ran away to Syria.
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 did not come into force until July 2015, after the girls had travelled to Syria.

- In March 2015, four other female students at Bethnal Green Academy, aged 15 and 16, were made wards of court, as was another teenaged girl with no known links to the school. The judge held that the orders were '*based on a perceived risk, not assessed as high, that the children may take steps to leave the jurisdiction and travel to a conflict zone*'. No formal findings were sought or made against the BGA girls in the wardship proceedings, as no one opposed the final orders.
- Amira's parents report that they were unaware that their daughter had gone to Syria until they saw it on the TV news headlines

- It is understood that Sharmeena had been attempting to radicalise Shamima, Amira and Kadiza since September 2014, shortly after she was radicalised herself, as it is something they are asked to do.
- In July 2015, under John Biggs' administration Cllr Rabina Khan bought a motion to council to safeguard children and young people from radicalisation
- In 2017, Ofsted condemned Tower Hamlets Children's Services overall as "inadequate".
- Cllr Rabina Khan brought a motion for extra resources for safeguarding against radicalisation in the February 2019 Budget Meeting.
- During her time in Syria, Shamima Begum reported that she has given birth to three children, all of whom have died
- In 2015, following extensive press coverage of Shamima, Amira and Kadiza, BGA changed its name to Green Spring Academy Shoreditch
- Sara Khan, the government's Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism, stated that Tower Hamlets Council found that the Shamima Begum case "did not meet the threshold for a serious case review."
- Earlier this year, Waltham Forest Council carried out a serious case review on two schoolgirls from the same school, Bethnal Green Academy (that SCR did not relate to radicalisation). https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/schoolgirls-feared-fgm-after-being-sent-abroad-to-be-dewesternised-a4178071.html

The Council Resolves:

This case has to be one of the biggest failures of the Prevent strategy and with no enquiry to learn lessons from the past.

A Serious Case Review must be carried out for the 4 girls who went to Syria aged 15 at the time.