

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.34 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 31 JULY 2019

**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 Planning, Air Quality and Tackling Poverty)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
Councillor Amina Ali	(Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor David Edgar	(Cabinet Member for Environment)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People)
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 Faroque Ahmed	
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	
Councillor Shah Ameen	
Councillor Kevin Brady	
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	
Councillor Peter Golds	
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	
Councillor Asma Islam	Mayoral Advisor for the Community and Voluntary Sector
Councillor Tarik Khan	
Councillor James King	
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	

Officers Present:

John Archer	(Biodiversity Officer, Development and Renewal)
Mark Baigent	(Interim Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Janet Fasan	(Divisional Director, Legal, Governance)
David Freeman	(Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy Manager)

Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Muhammad Islam	(Pollution Team Leader, Environmental Health)
Debbie Jones	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Abdul Khan	(Service Manager - Energy & Sustainability)
Alan McCarthy	(Asset Strategy Capital Delivery & Property Services)
Ralph Million	(Senior Strategic Asset Manager, Place)
Neville Murton	Corporate Director, Resources)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Michael Ritchie	(Place Shaping Team Leader, Strategic Planning)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)
Zoe Folley	(Committee Officer, Governance)
David Knight	(Senior Democratic Services Officer)

AGENDA ORDER

Due to levels of public interest the Mayor agreed during the meeting to vary the order of business to take Agenda Item 6.2 (Local Community Fund) as the first formal report on the agenda. All other business was taken in order. For clarity, the minutes are presented in the order the items appear on the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf Asmat Hussain (Corporate Director, Governance), Janet Fasan (Divisional Director, Legal Services) deputised.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

In relation to Agenda Item 6.2 (Local Community Fund) it was noted that in the normal course of business it would be expected that local councillors would have contact, engagement and links with many different local organisations including many of those who had applied for funding under this process and that this did not need to be specifically declared.

In addition to the above, Councillor Asma Begum declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6.2 in that her husband was a trustee of the Sporting Foundation.

In relation to the Agenda Item 6.3 (Strategic Review of Tower Hamlets Homes) a number of Members noted 'other interests' in that:

- Councillor James King (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) noted that he was a leaseholder of Tower Hamlets Homes.
- Councillors Sirajul Islam and Amina Ali were Council tenants.
- Councillor David Edgar's partner was a leaseholder.

- The Mayor and Councillor Rachel Blake had family members who were leaseholders.
- Councillor Sabina Akhtar was a Tower Hamlets Homes Board Member.

In relation to Agenda Item 6.11 (Angela Court, Burdett Road; Lease to Mulberry Housing Society) it was noted that officers had been appointed as directors of that company and that one board member was related by marriage to Councillor Sabina Akhtar.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 26 June 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The **Mayor** noted that discussions were ongoing in relation to the deferred report from the last meeting on urgent structural works required at Brewster House and Maltings House. One meeting had been held with residents and another was due soon. It was likely that a final decision would be taken via an Individual Mayoral Decision to avoid further delays.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were tabled in respect of Agenda Items 6.1 – 6.13. They were considered during discussion of the relevant items.

In addition Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported on the Committee's meeting earlier in the week.

He reported on a number of issues including:

- The Committee had reviewed the Cabinet report on the Local Community Fund and had a number of significant comments to make which had been set out in a letter sent to the Mayor.
- There had been a good discussion at the meeting with Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment, about the council's waste and recycling services. The Committee in particular were calling for the Council to have a carbon neutral service by 2025.
- The Committee had requested more regular contract monitoring reports be added to their workplan and it was noted that the workplan may well update through the year as new issues arose.

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

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Outcome of recent Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

The **Mayor** introduced the report highlighting the excellent work undertaken across the Council to bring Children's Social Care up to a 'Good' OFSTED rating. In particular he thanked the Lead Member, Councillor Danny Hassell, Corporate Director, Children and Culture, Debbie Jones, and officers within her team including Ronke Martins-Taylor (Divisional Director, Youth and Commissioning), Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director, Children's Social Care) and all of the children's social work services.

Councillor Danny Hassell, echoed the Mayor's thanks to officers and he particularly highlighted how the importance of leadership within children's services, the wider council and partners such as schools, health services and the police and how this strength had been recognised by OFSTED.

During discussion a number of Members also congratulated everyone involved and highlighted how the safety of children was a responsibility for everyone.

The **Mayor** noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the report and the outcome of the recent inspection.

6.2 Local Community Fund

The **Mayor** introduced the report on the Local Community Fund. He set out the history of grants arrangements and how these new arrangements had been set up following extensive involvement with the voluntary sector in designing the procedures. He welcomed the support the proposed projects could provide to local communities.

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, then took Members through the report in more detail explaining the proposals would provide over £2.6 million a year in funding to over fifty projects provided by the voluntary and community sectors to support local communities. The projects were arranged into a number of themes including around community safety, advice and information, digital including and health. She highlighted that there had been far more bids than there was available funding and so it was with great regret the Council had been unable to fund all of the good schemes that had been proposed. She also explained that the

evaluation process had been undertaken entirely independently of the Council.

The **Mayor** opened up the item for discussion and a number of points were raised, including:

- Concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee around the areas of deficiency highlighted by the equality impact analysis, whether the proposed £180k small grants funding was sufficient mitigation and how the identified gaps in provision would be filled.
- Hearing from a number of organisations and service users who expressed concerns that the proposed projects under the Advice and Information Theme would be replacing organisations who had provided advice to specific areas of the borough and communities for a long time and were well known and trusted. Could the new consortium reach all vulnerable people and communities?
- That many well run and valuable smaller organisations would not be able to survive without this funding and that the borough was in danger of losing vital support services.
- Criticism that the application process was too difficult for some organisations, although it was noted that the process had been thoroughly revamped in line with requests from the sector. The new contract monitoring system was also designed to be rigorous but more proportionate than previously.
- Questions about whether schemes relating to play and active lifestyles were missing from the list.
- Particular concerns that no bids led by the Somali Community had been successful. The **Mayor** acknowledged this as an issue.

The **Mayor** also noted requests to make the process for applying for mitigation funding as simple as possible for example by reusing applications from the initial Community Fund process.

Concluding the discussion, the **Mayor**:

- Thanked everyone for the good quality applications they had submitted and their desire to work to support the communities within the borough.
- Welcomed the good work that the successful projects would be able to undertake to support residents.
- Acknowledged the inevitable disappointment that it wasn't possible to accept many bids as the process was heavily oversubscribed.
- Noted the concerns submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses. He confirmed he would be writing back to the Committee.
- Noted the concerns expressed at the meeting in particular around ensuring the Advice Services supported all communities and the lack of success from organisations led by the Somali Community which he confirmed needed addressing.
- Highlighted that there was a process to look at mitigation funding to cover identified gaps in service and provision. He confirmed he wished to hear more from officers about the planned mitigation steps and in particular wished to see a quick process for applications.

- He stated that he expected the £180k small grants funding would be sufficient but he would examine that if it proved not to be the case.
- That the Council was exploring further options to increase available funds including looking at establishing a funders forum.

The **Mayor** then agreed the recommendations subject to consideration of the issues around the mitigation measures and Advice and Information Scheme as reflected in the resolution below. He further requested a separate report on activity-based projects.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the Local Community Fund programme and funding to individual organisations as set out in appendix F to the report for a period of 42 months from 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2023, subject to agreement of detailed funding agreements setting out the outcomes the funded projects are expected to achieve and conditions of funding. Subject to the following:
 - a. That a delivery plan for the mitigation measures set out in paragraph 3.56 of the report, including how these will address the concerns raised at Cabinet with regards to meeting the needs of Somali and other minority community residents, be presented to the Mayor for consideration and agreement prior to the conclusion of the final funding agreements set out in Appendix F.
 - b. That the 'Advice and Information' Scheme 3A, will not be implemented until a further report is presented to the Mayor setting out how the recommended advice consortium will provide wide geographic coverage including in the south west area of the borough and will reach excluded communities.
 - c. That the report referred to in 1a above will include appropriate timelines for the mitigation measures set out in the Equality Analysis Action Plan referred to in 3 below.
2. To agree that transitional arrangements will be put in place for funded organisations set out in paragraphs 3.54 to 3.58 of the report.
3. To note the Equality Analysis and the specific equalities considerations as set out in paragraph 4 of the report and to agree the Equality Analysis Action Plan set out in appendix A to the report.
4. That a separate report be presented to the Mayor setting out how the Council supports areas such as 'play', 'sports' and 'activities for elders' outside of the Local Community Fund programme and how the conclusion of Mainstream Grants will impact on these programmes.

6.3 Strategic Review of Tower Hamlets Homes

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report. He explained how the Council had appointed external advisors to carry out a review of Tower Hamlets Homes to determine the best future model for provision of the housing service. The report had been published and consulted on with residents.

During discussion Members heard from the Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenant and Resident Associations who expressed a desire for the service to be brought back 'in-house' at the Council. They also considered that the consultation exercise was insufficient.

The **Mayor** heard about the details of the consultation exercise that had taken place, confirmed he was comfortable that Tower Hamlets Homes could be kept fully accountable to the Council and noted the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Finally, he agreed a minor amendment to the recommendations to clarify the officer delegations and **agreed** the recommendations as amended.

RESOLVED

1. To note the findings of Altair's independent review of current housing management arrangements and appraisal of future options (Appendix 1 to the report).
2. To note the outcome of the recent consultation exercise (Appendix 2 to the report) and agree to proceed with the extension of the Council's management agreement with Tower Hamlets Homes for four years (to 2024), with a possible extension for a further four years (to 2028).
3. To delegate to the Corporate Director (Place) after consultation with the Corporate Director (Governance), authority to complete the said extension by July 2020 and do all that is necessary for this purpose including negotiating and approving a revised Management Agreement.

6.4 Air Quality Action Plan Update on Progress

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Planning, Air Quality and Tackling Poverty, introduced the report. She noted the tabled updated cover report and recommendations. She highlighted how illegal air quality impacts on residents within the borough (particularly children) and how the plan would tackle this important issue. It set out progress which had already been made against the action plan as well as new work and improvements. She noted the proposal was to consolidate the Air Quality Partnership Board into the Health and Wellbeing Board who would be monitoring this work in the future.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report, noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the progress the Council is making in implementing the Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022.
2. To approve the amalgamation of the Air Quality Partnership Board with the Health and Wellbeing Board.
3. To approve the preparation of an Air Quality Delivery Plan for the final years of the Air Quality Action Plan to address targeted action on our most polluted areas and the presence of PM2.5
4. To note the further actions identified in this report which would support a Delivery Plan.
5. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

6.5 Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024

Councillor David Edgar, Cabinet Member for Environment, introduced the report. He highlighted how important it was that other species be protected locally, especially with the global degradation of biodiversity which was being seen at the moment. Biodiversity was vital on its own terms but it also helped improve the wellbeing of residents.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report, noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-24 as attached in Appendix 1 to the report.
2. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in Paragraph 4.1 of the report.

6.6 Children and Families Strategy 2019-2024

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People, introduced the report. He highlighted that the report was the work of the children and families partnership which involved various agencies including schools, health and voluntary sectors. There had been lots of engagement with parents and children in preparing the strategy and in particular he highlighted that the strategy contained a Charter setting out what support children could expect.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. In relation to the pre-decision scrutiny question he agreed to consider whether tracking of movement out of the borough would be possible or useful. He then **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the contents of the draft Children and Families Strategy 2019-2024, which are reflective of changes which were made during the consultation phase that took place in May 2019.

6.7 Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Challenge Session recommendations: Communications

The Mayor introduced the report providing a response to the Overview and Scrutiny review of Communications. He welcomed the report and the proposed actions. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and agreed the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To agree to the responses to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (OSC) Challenge Session recommendations (at Appendix 1 to the report); and
2. To support officers' reporting of progress to OSC as required.

6.8 Proposed additions to the local list

Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Planning, Air Quality and Tackling Poverty, introduced the report. She explained that its purpose was to highlight buildings considered of distinctive local importance. The Council viewed it as important to hold on to local heritage where it could.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report, in particular noting the effort to add a number of public houses to the list. He noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and responses and **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the proposed additions to the local list.

6.9 Revised Commercial Property Lettings and Disposals Procedure

The Mayor introduced the report setting out proposed changes to the commercial property lettings and disposals procedure. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the attached revised procedure, and delegate to the Corporate Director, Place the authority to agree any subsequent amendments of a minor nature.

6.10 Land to the West of Virginia Street -London Docks School

The **Mayor** introduced the report. He explained that the purpose was to secure a site for the potential London Docks School which the Council was currently in negotiations over for the funding. He noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendation as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To agree to delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Place:
 - a. the negotiation and completion of the lease between The Council and St George, the developer.
 - b. the negotiation and completion of the sublease between The Council and Mulberry Trust
 - c. to run an EU compliant procurement process and negotiate, agree and let the construction contract

6.11 Angela Court, Burdett Road; Lease to Mulberry Housing Society

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report. He welcomed progress which had allowed the establishment of Mulberry Housing Society (MHS) to support the provision of Council housing. This report was proposing that a lease be granted to MHS for Angela Court.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and thanked officers for the hard work to get to this point. He noted the exempt appendix (exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 due to the financial information contained within) and the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To agree to grant a lease of Angela Court, Burdett Road to Mulberry Housing Society on the main terms set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report.
2. To delegate to the Corporate Director, Place, in consultation with the Corporate Director, Resources, authority to negotiate a lease with Mulberry Housing Society that substantially reflects the main terms.

3. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

6.12 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Quarter 1 2019/20

During discussion of this item the **Mayor** formally moved under Procedure Rule 12(m) that the meeting be extended for a period of up to half an hour as allowed for under Rule 9.1 to ensure all remaining business could be completed.

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector introduced the report. She highlighted concerns over the forecast overspends set out in the quarter one report and stated that directorates were developing plans to tackle any underlying issues identified. She also noted that there was a forecast underspend on capital projects.

The **Mayor** highlighted the national crisis in funding which was causing many of these issues and how achieving savings proposals was becoming more challenging. Nevertheless it was important that Lead Members work with directorates to ensure the Council could meet its budget targets. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and agreed the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the Council's projected outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget and Housing Revenue Account budgets agreed for 2019-20, based on information as at the end of June as detailed in the Appendices to the report.
2. To adopt the listed pipeline schemes as set out in Appendix 6 to the report into the Council's approved capital programme.
3. To agree that approval to proceed to award contracts for works and services be delegated to the Corporate Director, Place in consultation with the Corporate Director, Governance, subject to tenders being within the capital estimate amount and scheme PIDs being approved at Capital Strategy Board.
4. To note and approve the capital exception and change note summary in Appendix 6 to the report.
5. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report.

6.13 Medium Term Financial Strategy Refresh & 2020-21 Budget Planning

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She highlighted the significant uncertainty caused by a number of issues such as the lack of clarity on government funding plans. There were concerns that significant further savings would be

required. The expected resetting of business rates was also a significant concern.

The **Mayor** noted the concerns raised and also the request from Overview and Scrutiny for early engagement in the budget process and confirmed his desire to be as open as possible. He noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To note the updated draft budget position for 2020-21.
2. To note the need to set a balanced budget over the whole of the MTFS period.
3. To note the issues and actions set out in this report which are informing the development of the Council's MTFS for 2020-23.
4. To note the indicative timeline of formal budget consultation with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders and to receive feedback on the consultation at Cabinet in November.

In relation to the Housing Revenue Account:-

5. To note the most recent HRA 30 year financial modelling assumes that from 2020-21 HRA rents will increase by CPI + 1% for five years, and then by CPI only.

In relation to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS):-

6. To maintain the existing 100% Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020-21 protecting our residents on low incomes.

6.14 Nominations to Outside Bodies

The **Mayor** introduced the report setting out appointments to a number of outside bodies. He **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the nominations to Outside Bodies as shown in Paragraph 3.5 of the report.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

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

1. That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the remaining agenda item contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

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. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**11.1 Poplar Baths - Refinancing**

The **Mayor** introduced the report setting out the need for refinancing in relation to Poplar Baths PPP arrangements. The recommendations were amended in relation to the necessary Treasury Management Strategy Statement agreement required and he then **agreed** the recommendations as amended.

RESOLVED

1. To note the need to refinance the Poplar baths PPP arrangement and the options available for refinancing.
2. To note the proposed changes, to be reported to the Audit Committee, to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement necessary to enable debt finance to be provided to the Poplar Baths project.
3. To delegate to the Corporate Director of Resources the power to agree the commercial terms under which the Council would be prepared to offer finance to the project.

12. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 8.59 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS