

## LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

## MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.32 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2020

ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)**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 Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Children and Schools )
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	(Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Social Inclusion
Councillor Asma Islam	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Environment
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Planning
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Public Realm

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor Denise Jones	Older People's Champion
Councillor James King	

**Officers Present:**

Magdalene Bannis-Roy	Youth Services Strategic Transformation Development Lead
Stephen Bramah	(Deputy Head of the Mayor's office)
Terry Bryan	(Head of Pupil Services and School Sufficiency)
Ann Corbett	(Divisional Director, Community Safety)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Lucy Fordham	Senior Communications Officer
Jonathan Fox	Legal Services
Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Asmat Hussain	(Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring)

Ronke Martins-Taylor	Officer) (Divisional Director, Youth & Commissioning)
Christine McInnes	(Divisional Director, Education and Partnership, Children's)
Neville Murton	(Corporate Director, Resources)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Rachael Sadegh	(Service Manager Substance Misuse, Community Safety)
Judith St John	(Divisional Director, Sports, Leisure and Culture)
Joanne Starkie	(Head of Strategy and Policy - Health Adults and Communities)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Karen Swift	(Divisional Director, Housing)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Keith Williams	(Head of Health Borough Programme)
Neil Isaac	(Interim Director of Finance, Tower Hamlets Homes)
William Manning	(Director of Asset Management THH)
Susmita Sen	(Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets Homes)
Rupert Brandon	(Interim Head of Housing Supply)
Ben Campbell	(Tower Hamlets Homes)
Neil Wilson-Prior	(interim Capital Delivery Manager, THH)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)
David Knight	(Senior Democratic Services Officer)
Farhana Zia	(Democratic Services Officer)

## AGENDA ORDER

At the meeting the **Mayor** agreed to vary the order of business to take Agenda Item 6.8 (Youth Service Delivery Model) as the first report to enable the public speakers to be heard at the start of the meeting. All other reports were taken in order. For clarity, the minutes are presented in the order items were listed on the agenda.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of James Thomas (Corporate Director, Children and Culture) for whom Christine McInnes (Divisional Director, Education and Partnership) was deputising.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillors Sabina Akhtar and Asma Islam declared 'Other Interests' in Agenda Item 12.1 as they had been appointed to the Board of Tower Hamlets Homes. Councillor Sirajul Islam declared an 'Other Interest' in the same item as a leaseholder. All members took part in the discussion on that item.

### **3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 24 June 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

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

See the minutes.

### **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 the following agenda items:

- 6.1 Understanding the impact of COVID-19 in Tower Hamlets
- 6.3 Medium Term Financial Strategy Refresh & 2021-22 Budget Planning
- 6.4 Financial Outturn for 2019/20
- 6.5 Budget Monitor as at Period 2 for 2020/21
- 6.6 Oaklands School – Use of Raines School Lower Site
- 6.7 Safe and viable re-opening of leisure centres
- 6.8 Update on Youth Service Delivery Model
- 6.9 Contingency Fund – additional COVID-19 support for the voluntary and Community Sector
- 6.11 CCTV Modernisation

These were considered during the discussions on the relevant items.

In addition, Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) provided the meeting with an update on recent OSC work. He reported that at their meeting earlier in the week the Committee had taken four substantive items – these were on:

- Budget Monitoring where the Committee noted the significant pressures on the Council finances. The Committee would be looking to play an active part in budget planning for this year.
- Liveable Streets – in particular, looking at funding and delivery of schemes and how resident suggestions and concerns were being dealt with.
- The Impact of COVID-19 on the borough with a detailed presentation on key impacts and inequalities.
- Related to that report the Committee reviewed its COVID-19 scrutiny report looking at key issues for the Council to consider such as around housing, controlling local outbreaks, mental health and education. The report also explored the financial implications for the Council.

The **Mayor** thanked Councillor James King for his update.

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

Nil items.

## 6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

### 6.1 Understanding the impact of Covid-19 in Tower Hamlets

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing introduced the report showing analysis on how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected the borough. She highlighted the impact reported on equalities, the disproportionate impact on BAME communities and the generally devastating impacts of the pandemic. She noted that the Council was likely to see increased pressure on services to support impacted residents.

She also noted positive impacts including that over 2000 people in the borough volunteered to help their communities and support people going through difficult times.

The Cabinet were provided with an overview of the presentation attached as an appendix to the report including looking at the comparators with the rest of the country and the very significant and differing impacts on different groups within the borough. The presentation also examined the impact on businesses, partners and services such as health and social care, schools and more.

Potentially positive impacts were also noted such as those on crime, air quality and the possibility of a green recovery.

The meeting then heard from two local residents who had suffered personal losses due to COVID-19 and in particular had concerns that care provided by local care homes was seriously deficient during the crisis. The **Mayor** thanked them for their contribution and confirmed that the issues raised would be explored further.

The **Mayor** also noted the support the Council had been providing to residents and business during the crisis. He noted that the analysis was a living document and would change as the pandemic progressed.

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

## RESOLVED

1. To note the report.

## 6.2 Renewed Strategic Plan

The Mayor introduced the report setting out the refreshed Strategic Plan. This followed discussions which had taken place across the Council and with Leader Members on proposed changes that would be useful to continuously improve the document. He noted that, although the Plan was nearly complete, there were still some changes required and he asked that he be consulted on the final changes.

### RESOLVED

1. That the refreshed Strategic Plan 2020-23 be approved in draft form and agree that further changes to the final document must be made following consultation with the Mayor.

## 6.3 Medium Term Financial Strategy Refresh & 2021-22 Budget Planning

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She highlighted the very large negative impact the current COVID-19 pandemic was having both in terms of pressure of additional spending as well as loss of future income. This was on top of the existing demands being placed on services such as adult social care. It was also noted that delivering pre-agreed savings was vital to the budget planning process.

The **Mayor** 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 2021-22 to 2023-24, and specifically that a further gap has arisen in 2021-22 since this was last reported to Cabinet.
2. To note the need to set a balanced budget over the whole of the MTFS period and that prompt and decisive action is required urgently to address the challenging financial position outlined in the report as highlighted by the now increased budget gaps.
3. To Note the issues and actions set out in this report that are informing the development of the MTFS for 2021-24 which will include the following recommendations: -
4. To remove the previously agreed growth item in the MTFS relating to Early Help, in the sum of £0.475m (see paragraph 3.72); and
5. To approve the revised policy for management of the New Homes Bonus specific grant so that it fully supplements the revenue budget going forward.

6. 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 December.

#### 6.4 Financial Outturn for 2019-20

Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. It included details of the general fund, dedicated schools grant and housing revenue account.

She highlighted the challenges to the Council in the current financial climate and the need to balance reserves against current spending. There was a recommendation that there would be a drawdown from the new homes bonus into general fund reserves.

The Mayor noted the comments made and the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

#### RESOLVED

1. To note the Council's provisional outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget, Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme for 2019-20, based on information as at early June 2020.
2. After taking consideration of the reduced level of General Fund reserves as presented, to approve the drawdown of £11.7m from the New Home Bonus reserve into GF reserves, in order to maintain balances at £20m.
3. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

#### 6.5 Budget Monitor as at Period 2 for 2020/21

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the budget monitoring report for Period 2 for 2020/21. She highlighted the areas with particular budget pressures and stated that remedial action was being taken to address those.

She reported that stringent measures were in place to tackle these challenges and it was also noted that more general restrictions had been put in place around areas such as recruitment and agency costs.

The **Mayor** highlighted the importance of keeping budgets under control and highlighted the role all Lead Members had in this regard. 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, Housing Revenue Account and earmarked reserves for 2020-21, based on information as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020.
2. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

**6.6 Oaklands School – Use of Raines School Lower Site**

During discussion of this item the **Mayor agreed** to extend the guillotine for the meeting by up to half an hour in line with the Council's meeting procedure rule 9.2.

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children and Schools, introduced the report providing a route for the Oaklands School to gain land to accommodate additional capacity by purchasing the Raines lower school site. This expansion would increase the sustainability of Oaklands school.

The **Mayor** noted the importance of ensuring value for money was achieved in the process. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

**RESOLVED**

1. To authorise the Corporate Director of Place to undertake negotiations with the London Diocesan Board for Schools and/or Raine's Foundation Trust for a licence agreement (see Exempt Appendix 3) followed by a lease (see Exempt Appendix 4) for the Lower Site in Old Bethnal Green Road, E2. It is intended the license will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 for four months for a peppercorn rent, to enable the expansion in school places in the Oaklands Community Secondary School and ensure the LA meets its duty to provide sufficient school places;
2. To authorise that the Corporate Director of Place to agree a rent (see Exempt Appendix 2a to the report), for the larger portion of the site (76%), for a two-year lease period with suitable break clauses, conditional on the negotiated valuation of the Lower Site that will be agreed by September 2020. If the purchase concludes sooner with the authorised owner of the Lower Site;
3. To authorise the Corporate Director of Place to undertake negotiations with the London Diocesan Board for Schools and/or Raine's Foundation Trust for the purchase of the Raine's Foundation School Lower Site in Old Bethnal Green Road, E2 based on a joint valuation between LBTH and the Diocesan Board (see Exempt Appendix 2 b to the report); and

4. To authorise the Corporate Director of Place to undertake negotiations with the Raines Foundation Trust to agree a lease for their part of the Lower Site for a two-year period and also to agree a suitable purchase price.

## 6.7 Safe and Viable Re-opening of Leisure Centres

Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit, introduced the report on plans to begin the safe re-opening of the Council's leisure centres.

She noted the challenges being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic but explained that leisure centres provided a vital support for the health and wellbeing of local residents and it was important that they were opened where possible. She also noted the financial challenges the lockdown had caused the leisure centre operator and the report set out mitigation measures in relation to this.

The **Mayor** requested that he and the Lead Member be consulted before the final contract variation was confirmed.

He also noted that, although only certain centres were opening to begin with, there was a desire to open all centres should this prove possible and the closures would be kept under review. He asked that he be consulted before final confirmation of each phase of the re-opening plans. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations amended to take account of the comments above.

### RESOLVED

1. To authorise the Corporate Director Resources to negotiate and agree a management fee sum of up to £181k for Poplar Baths.
2. To authorise the Corporate Director Resources to negotiate and agree the removal of the Leisure Management service element from the main Poplar Baths PPP agreement, to bring it in line with the main leisure management contract or as a continuation of the current arrangements between LBTH and Folera.
3. To approve a contract variation to the main leisure management contract to provide a management fee of up to £593k to GLL, pending further negotiation of the repayment schedule and share of surplus and following further consultation with the Mayor and Lead Member.
4. To approve the proposed pricing schedule at paragraph 3.2 of the report.
5. To approve the phased restoration of safe and viable leisure centre activities in three phases with decisions upon implementation of each phase to be determined following a review of guidance,

implementation, demand and lessons learned and following consultation with the Mayor and Lead Member in advance of each phase of restoration.

6. To note that a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment has not been conducted at this stage, however, if the leisure services were to cease, or some centres not to reopen, there would be loss of service provision for protected characteristics including single sex provision, older people and disability

### **6.8 Update on Youth Service Delivery Model (Commissioned and In-house)**

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities, introduced the report providing an update on work to review the Council's Youth Service delivery model.

The meeting then heard from a number of young people, parents and service providers on the high value they placed on the services they accessed and the need to ensure young people were supported through appropriate services in future. The report was then debated by those present at the meeting.

The **Mayor** thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion. He highlighted the importance of youth provision to many young people in the borough and that he and his administration would continue to ensure the Council directed its limited resources in the best way, which is what this model was designed to achieve. He also highlighted that further work would be taking place to consult with services and service users on the future of youth services. Finally, he indicated that he would be looking to see if the saving set out in the recommendations could possibly be reinvested in commissioned services in future although he was cautious as to what was possible.

He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To approve the proposed model for delivery of commissioned and in-house youth activity provision.
2. To approve the commissioned contract value for centre based youth activity; detached youth projects; and specialist youth provision for the period 2021-2024 (CS5678).
3. Following tender, delegate authority to the Corporate Director Children's and Culture to award contract CS5678.
4. To authorise the Divisional Director, Legal Services to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contract CS5678.

5. To approve a up to 4-month extension to the exiting providers 1-year contract due to potential delays in engaging with stakeholders during the Covid 19 pandemic.
6. To approve the additional MTFS savings of £100,000.

#### **6.9 Contingency Fund – additional Covid-19 support for the Voluntary and Community Sector**

The **Mayor** explained that the report on the COVID-19 Contingency Fund was proposing changes to the support provided to local organisations. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. To agree recommendations to replace the existing transitional element of the Contingency Fund with the Covid Community Fund.
2. To agree to reduce the maximum award of the emergency element of the contingency fund from £20,000 to £10,000.

#### **6.10 Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels Action Plan**

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities, introduced the report. She welcomed the work scrutiny had done on this issue and highlighted that actions proposed in the report.

The **Mayor** also welcomed the report and **agreed** the recommendation.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. To note the report of the scrutiny challenge session on Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel and agree the action plan in response to the report recommendations.

#### **6.11 CCTV Modernisation**

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities, introduced the report. She highlighted that this was a technical report setting out governance and capital spending in relation to the Council's CCTV systems.

The **Mayor** noted that a lot of work had been going on to improve the Council's CCTV systems. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and **agreed** the recommendations as set out.

**RESOLVED**

1. To endorse the direction of travel for modernisation of the CCTV service and note the interdependencies of the procurement, digitalisation / capital upgrade and relocation of the CCTV control suite to the new Town Hall.
2. To issue direct awards for a period of up to two years to the three organisations named to ensure continuity of service in the period prior to implementation of a new digital CCTV network.
3. To authorise a draw-down of the capital funds (£3.1m) currently in the Capital pipeline to upgrade the CCTV system to ensure the financial sustainability of the service.

**6.12 Progress report of the Loneliness Taskforce**

Councillor Denise Jones, the Mayor's Older People's Champion introduced the report on the work of the Loneliness Taskforce. She highlighted that this was an issue that needed tackling through services across the Council. The taskforce highlighted a number of issues that needed tackling such as on digital exclusion and reaching all local cultural groups. She welcomed the increase in volunteering seen during the current pandemic and highlighted the importance of trying to maintain that activity afterwards.

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

**RESOLVED**

1. To reconfirm that tackling loneliness and isolation is a strategic issue that the Council as a whole must address involving all service areas and resources.
2. To support the continued building of an alliance to tackle loneliness including our partners in Tower Hamlets Together, faith groups, the voluntary and community sector and the wider community.
3. To endorse the importance of highlighting the impact of loneliness and the inspiring response of our local communities in the Council's post Covid-19 communications planning.
4. To mandate that tackling loneliness continues to be a key thread in the council's community engagement strategy building on the community mobilisation that has been generated through the Covid-19 emergency.
5. To support the urgent consideration of how the digital exclusion and digital poverty of people in our community can be systematically addressed to ensure that everyone has access to digital tools to access the services they need as well as to keep in touch with friends and family.

6. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in the report.

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

Nil items.

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

**RESOLVED**

1. That in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4 of the Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the following exempt business: Item 12.1 THH Major Works Contracts Variations. This is due to the information within containing exempt information defined in Paragraph 3 (financial or business affairs), 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**

Nil items.

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

**12.1 THH Major Works Contracts Variations**

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

**RESOLVED**

1. The contract variations, funding totals and delegated authorities set out in the report were agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.02 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS