

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE CABINET****HELD AT 5.35 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 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 James King	
Councillor Val Whitehead	

Officers Present:

Jane Abraham	(Housing Project Manager)
Kevin Bartle	(Interim Divisional Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit)
Adam Boey	(Senior Strategy & Policy Manager - Corporate)
Stephen Bramah	(Deputy Head of the Mayor's office)
Terry Bryan	(Service Head (Pupil Access and School Sufficiency))
Andreas Christophorou	(Divisional Director, Communications)
Vicky Clark	(Divisional Director for Growth and Economic Development)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Thorsten Dreyer	(Head of Intelligence and Performance)

Janet Fasan	(Divisional Director, Legal, Governance)
Emily Fieran-Reed	(Senior Strategy and Policy Manager, Communities Team, Corporate Strategy & Policy Strategy, Policy & Performance Division)
Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Chris Harrison	(Liveable Streets Technical Director)
Dan Jones	(Divisional Director, Public Realm)
Marion Kelly	(Finance Improvement Team - Programme Director)
Christine McInnes	(Divisional Director, Education and Partnerships)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Mark Waterman	(Strategy & Policy Manager)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer for whom Janet Fasan (Divisional Director, Legal Services) was deputising.
- Neville Murton, Corporate Director, Resources, for whom Kevin Bartle, Interim Divisional Director, Finance, Procurement and Audit was deputising.
- Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place, for whom Dan Jones, Divisional Director, Public Realm was deputising.

Councillor Dan Tomlinson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) – Lead on Public Realm apologised that he would need to leave the meeting early.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. However, it was noted that a number of Members lived in and/or represented the areas of Bow covered by Agenda Item 6.1 (Liveable Streets Bow Consultation Outcome report). They took part in the discussion of the item.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 28 October 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the amendment of Recommendation 2 of Agenda Item 6.8 (Billingsgate Market – Update on Joint Working with the City of London Corporation) to change the date of 27 November 2020 to November 2021.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The **Mayor** made a number of announcements including that:

- The Council had published its Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy. He also highlighted the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. This was an extremely important campaign that the Council was supportive of as part of wider efforts to tackle these unacceptable issues and looking to create a fairer, more equitable society.
- Noted the government had announced the Spending Review and the Council would be analysing its impact on the authority.
- He would shortly be signing an Individual Mayoral Decision on providing school meals for children in need over the Christmas holiday period.
- The Covid-19 infection rate may have slowed in the borough but it remained extremely important for residents to act with care in their daily lives. He welcomed the news of successful vaccines.
- He congratulated Mayflower Primary School for being awarded the 'School of the Year' in the Annual Sunday Times list.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were tabled in relation to all the reports on the agenda. These were considered during discussion of each relevant agenda item.

In addition, Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided an update on the Committee's meeting earlier in the week. He reported on a number of discussion items including:

- The presentation from the Mayor and Chief Executive relating to the Council's Strategic Performance Reporting noting both areas of high performance but also highlighted issues such as around Workpath and Youth Justice.
- An update from the Director of Public Health on the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Council's plans in areas such as mass testing. He also thanked the Mayor for his response to the Committee's Covid-19 review report.
- A Spotlight session on Improving Resident Engagement with a particular focus on methods of consultation including the impact of the pandemic.
- That the Committee had agreed a new 'Councillor Call for Action' process to allow issues to be considered where all other avenues for a solution had been exhausted.

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

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

The **Mayor** reported on his response to the call-in of the decision taken at the 23 September 2020 cabinet meeting in relation to Housing Allocations. He explained that he had taken time to fully explore the issues and concerns raised as this was a technical issue.

He highlighted the housing crisis in the area and acknowledged the challenge between providing good options for those in housing needs whilst not also leading to expectations that could not be fulfilled. For example, very few properties became available for those in Band 3.

He explained that he had agreed to reinstate existing housing tenants under the age of 50 to Band 3 of the Common Housing Register and would be retaining the proposal to allow applicants placed out of the borough in private rented accommodation to remain on the housing register for three years.

He welcomed continued scrutiny of the Council's housing allocations policies.

RESOLVED

1. To note the response of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the call-in.
2. To agree to reinstate existing social housing tenants under the age of 50 to Band 3 of the Common Housing Register (a change to the original recommendation 3)
3. To retain the proposal to allow applicants placed in out of borough Private Rented Sector accommodation to remain on the housing register for a time-limited three-year period. (as set out in Paragraph 3.3 of the original report)

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Liveable Streets Bow consultation outcome report

Councillor Dan Tomlinson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) – Lead on Public Realm, introduced the report updating Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation on Liveable Streets proposals for the Bow area and seeking agreement on a number of recommendations.

He explained that consultation packs had been sent to the 14,000 households in the area. The results showed that a majority of residents in the area were in favour of each part of the scheme. The changes would invest in the area and support work to reduce pollution and improve the general environment. He thanked the officers who have worked had on this project and the ward councillors who had helped with the consultation.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and the responses to the consultation. He noted the wide range of opinions received. He proposed an amendment to the existing recommendation 3 to further work up the blue badge scheme in relation to the bus gates and report back to Cabinet including looking at exemptions, timings and related matters.

Cabinet then proceeded to hear from a number of residents of Bow who all welcomed the proposals and highlighted the detrimental impact pollution and the dominance of cars on local streets was having on the health and wellbeing of residents.

The Cabinet discussed the report and noted a number of points including:

- Whether the consultation exercise had reached all residents with an explanation of the efforts, including by Ward Councillors, to ensure that happened but also concerns raised by a number of people, including Councillor Peter Golds, Leader of the Conservative Group, at the meeting that the consultation may not have been sufficient.
- It was noted that there were lower levels of BME respondents but that those who did respond had shown a majority in favour.
- The significant increase in traffic over recent years.
- How best to enforce any changes that were agreed.
- The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses that had been tabled.

In relation to ensuring all viewpoints had been heard, the **Mayor** stated that he would be looking to undertake a Town Hall style meeting in the area to provide another opportunity for views to be expressed.

The reasons for urgency set out in the report were agreed. Namely, that: The report was not published five clear days in advance of the meeting. This is due to the additional time required to review the large volume of appendices and respondents to the consultation. If the outcome of the consultation is not considered at this meeting it will impact of the timely delivery of the scheme and risk potential funding loss from third party sources.

The **Mayor** then proposed the amended recommendations to Cabinet, who voted in turn and it was **agreed** unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To note and conscientiously consider the results of the engagement to date and public consultation of Bow Liveable Streets (Appendix C & D to the report)
2. To approve the final scheme design for the Bow area as part of the Liveable Streets programme (Appendix B to the report) and summarised in section 3.3 of the report
3. To devise an exemption scheme for consideration in respect of vehicles belonging to designated blue badge holders.

4. To agree that a further report be brought to Cabinet for approval setting out the options for the operation of the Roman Road and Coborn Road bus gate and timed closure including hours of operation and potential exemptions for local blue badge holders, carers and potentially other local groups. The report will additionally explain how changes to exemptions might be made, in a way that is both transparent but responsive, to these or other timed closures.
5. To approve the use of existing frameworks or term contracts to award an order up to a value of £3 Million for the completion of the Works.

6.2 Planning for School Places 2020/21

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children and Schools, introduced the report setting out the Council's planning for provision of school places. He thanked the team who had undertaken a huge amount of work to bring this level of confidence to the plans set out. The proposals would support families in accessing good quality education.

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

The **Mayor** thanked him for the update and proposed the recommendations as set out. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the position on the current and projected demand for school places.
2. To note the progress made in relation to:
 - a. the actions being taken to rationalise the primary school provision in the west of the borough where there is surplus;
 - b. the plans and options for future school developments to meet the anticipated need for additional primary places in the east of the borough, including the expansion of existing schools and the development of a new school at Wood Wharf on the Isle of Dogs;
 - c. the development of the new secondary school at London Dock;
 - d. the development of the new secondary school site at Westferry Printworks on the Isle of Dogs;
 - e. the rebuild/refurbish George Green's Secondary School;
 - f. the expansion of Phoenix Special School and the plan for the enlargement of Beatrice Tate Special School.
3. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 5 of the report.
4. To note that this report sets out the council's plan to exercise its Education functions aligned with the functions of the council as a Local Planning Authority (LPA), and particularly concerning the

approach to the current allocation of school sites in the Local Plan as adopted in January 2020. The council intends to initiate a review of the Local Plan over the course of the next year.

5. To agree to authorise the Corporate Director - Place to enter into the development agreement and the works funding agreement and all other related agreements (including leasing heads of terms if necessary) with the Department For Education in order to access the DFE contribution for the construction of a new secondary school on the London Dock Site.

6.3 Report on the outcome of the preliminary stakeholder consultation (pre-statutory) on the proposal to close St Matthias Primary School.

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children and Schools, introduced the report on the outcome of preliminary stakeholder consultation on the closure of St Mathias Primary School. He reported that this was a small school suffering from a falling roll and there was a surplus of places in that part of the borough. It was expected that all pupils could be accommodated in other suitable local schools.

It was therefore proposed that the Council proceed to the statutory consultation stage of the process.

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted and the **Mayor** proposed the recommendations as set out. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To agree to move to the publication of a statutory notice for 28 days, in respect of the proposal to close St Matthias CofE Primary School. This will take effect from 31st August 2021, with the displaced pupils admitted to other nearby schools, including a nearby Church of England Primary School.
2. To note the Equalities Assessment set out in Section 4 of the report and attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

6.4 Report on the outcome of the preliminary stakeholder consultation (pre-statutory) on the proposal to close Cherry Trees Special School

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children and Schools, introduced the report on the outcome of the preliminary stakeholder consultation into proposals to close Cherry Trees School. He noted that there were only a small number of children on the school roll and that the Council had been looking at its arrangements for specialist support. It was considered that support within mainstream schools had a lot of benefits for the specific children and children more widely.

The **Mayor** acknowledged that the school had fulfilled its purpose for many years but that a different option was now a better solution.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted and the **Mayor** proposed the recommendations as set out. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To agree to move to the publication of a statutory notice for 28 days, in respect of the proposal to close Cherry Trees School. This will take effect from 31st August 2021, with the displaced pupils admitted to other specialist provision appropriate to their needs.
2. To note the Equalities Assessment set out in Section 4 of the report and attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

6.5 Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-23

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report on the new Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy. She highlighted how important the relationship with voluntary and community sector organisations was to the Council.

The impact of the pandemic had particularly demonstrated this as we had seen organisations reimagining their services to meet the changing demands over the year supporting some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded residents in the borough.

A particular goal for the new strategy was in how to leverage new resources into the sector and how to improve links to all local partners and not just the Council. She welcomed the report and commended the Strategy to Cabinet.

Peter Okali, Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service welcomed the Strategy and highlighted it had been developed with the full involvement of the sector.

The Cabinet discussed the report noting a number of points including the need to ensure that volunteers were used to support, rather than replace, permanent staff and also on the dangers of over-reliance on private funding sources.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and stated his pride that the borough had such a large and effective voluntary and community sector. Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted and the **Mayor** moved the recommendation as set out. This was **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To agree the Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-2024, including the actions and outcomes under each priority.

6.6 Quarterly Performance & Improvement Monitoring – Q2 2020/21

During discussion of this item it was agreed under Council Procedure Rule 12.1 (m) to extend the meeting as set out in Rule 9.1 for up to half an hour to conclude the business on the agenda.

The **Mayor** introduced the latest report setting out the Council's quarterly performance monitoring information. He highlighted that the pandemic had caused unexpected difficulties to the authority and, as a result, priorities had to change and not all areas originally identified for monitoring were currently performing in the same way as planned.

However, the report did still demonstrate improvements in a number of areas and also highlighted areas of concern and it was still important to investigate any problems identified.

The **Mayor** noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and proposed the recommendations

RESOLVED

1. To note the strategic delivery and performance report for quarters 1 and 2 2020/21.
2. To note the performance of the strategic measures, including those measures where the minimum expectation has been missed; and
3. To note progress in delivering the council's Strategic Plan.

6.7 Direct Award to Look Ahead Care and Support for the support contract for Hackney Road, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government funded Homeless Hostel Project.

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, introduced the report. She explained that the purpose of the report was to agree capital and revenue funding to Look Ahead Care and Support to provide accommodation and support at their homeless hostel at Hackney Road. This award followed a successful bid for funding from the government. It was noted that capital expenditure included upgrading CCTV to help minimise crime in that area.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted and the **Mayor** proposed the recommendation as set out. This was **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To agree the direct award to Look Ahead Care and Support in order to meet the funding conditions of the MHCLG funding bid.

6.8 Approved Capital programme 20/2023 – additional projects

The reasons for urgency as set out in the report were agreed, namely that:

“The report was not published five clear days in advance of the meeting. This is due to the additional time required to confirm the availability of funding sources to finance the additions to the programme and give time for finance and legal comments to be completed. This report seeks budget approvals for programmes, many of which are expected to be delivered in 2020/21, such as Liveable Streets projects, highway maintenance and the buy-back programme for the provision of temporary accommodation. If this report is not considered at this meeting, there will be insufficient time for these programmes to be delivered and this will have a negative impact on local residents.”

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing (with responsibility for Capital Delivery), introduced the report setting out further projects for approval as part of the 2020-2023 Capital Programme. She explained that these projects had been agreed in principle before but now that funding sources were confirmed they were presented for final sign-off. She recommended this ambitious programme be approved by the Cabinet.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. He noted the discussion around a number of school and college sites, including the Westferry school site. The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted. The **Mayor** proposed the recommendations as set out. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the budget allocation of £37.133m for additions to the Approved Capital Programme (Table 3) set out in this report, subject to sign off through the capital governance process, agreement to proceed given by the Corporate Director of Place and Corporate Director of Resources and that schemes funded by future capital receipts, s106 and/or CIL will not go ahead until such funds have been securely received (an appendix will be tabled at CLB).
2. To note the funding sources for the new additions to the Annual Rolling Programme, as set out in paragraph 4.7 of the report.

3. To note the funding sources for the new additions to the Invest to Save programme, as set out in paragraph 4.8 of the report, subject to business cases being approved by the Corporate Director of Place and Corporate Director of Resources.
4. To note the funding sources for the additional schemes being added to the Approved Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23.
5. To approve delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Place and Corporate Director of Resources for all activities required to deliver the additional schemes e.g. go out to tender, appoint consultants and contractors, acquire land interests, appropriate land from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the delivery of new council homes, subject to approved budget.
6. To note that this programme requires a reduction to Year 3 of the Streetlighting Replacement Programme by £0.060m to provide sufficient capital receipts for other priority schemes.

6.9 Community Information Panels – Concession contract update and recommendation

The reasons for urgency set out in the report were agreed (see below). However, the **Mayor** stated that he was not satisfied with reports being completed so close to the Cabinet meeting.

“The report was not published five clear days in advance of the meeting. This is due to the additional time needed to review the appendices in order to provide finance and legal clearance. If the recommendations are not considered at this meeting, this will have an impact in delaying commercial income for the council.”

The **Mayor** introduced the report seeking agreement on a concession contract for Community Information Panels. He highlighted the importance of the report to the Council given it was providing an income stream for the authority from shared advertising space. It was confirmed following questions that a ‘profit share’ arrangement was not seen as providing best value and that the contract provided a clear and consistent income which was seen as the best option.

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted as was the exempt appendix which provided more information on the contract arrangements.

The **Mayor** proposed the recommendations as set out. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the changing of the original approval for a contract length of 5 years as agreed in 2018, to a 10 year contract.
2. To approve the recommendations set out in the TG2 report to the procurement advisory board (supplied as an appendix to the report) to award the 10 year CIPS contract to the highest scoring bid at an annual rental of £90,750.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Nil items.

9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

11. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS