

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.35 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 24 MARCH 2021

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 for Community Safety, Faith and Equalities)
Councillor Rachel Blake	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services and Education)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Housing)
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 Ehtasham Haque	
Councillor Rabina Khan	
Councillor James King	
Councillor Puru Miah	
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	

Officers Present:

Zamil Ahmed	(Head of Procurement)
Dr Somen Banerjee	(Director of Public Health)
Kevin Bartle	(Corporate Director, Resources and Governance)
Vicky Clark	(Divisional Director for Growth and Economic Development)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal)
David Freeman	(Policy and Strategy Manager, Voluntary and

Sharon Godman	Community Sector (VCS) (Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Paul McHale	Head of Business Applications, ICT
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
melissa spearman	Planning & Building Control
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Karen Swift	(Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Sarah Wilks	(Infrastructure Planning Team Leader)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. However, for the record, Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman and Councillor James King both noted they were leaseholders of Tower Hamlets Homes.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 3 March 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor noted that:

- The Country had recently marked the one-year anniversary of the first Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.
- This Cabinet meeting was taking place during the pre-election period for the May elections.

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 – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Report
- 6.3 – Community Hubs

- 6.4 – Council Buildings Leased to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations
- 6.6 – Approval of the new Intermediate Housing Policy
- 6.8 – London Dock School – Funding Agreement and Leases
- 6.9 – Contract Forward Plan 2020/21 – Quarter Four

These were considered during discussion of the relevant items.

In addition, Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) provided Cabinet with a brief update of the Committee's recent activities.

At the Committee's meeting on Monday they had discussed a number of issues including:

- Receiving their regular Covid-19 update.
- A Spotlight session on the new Town Hall including developing plans on the Council's local presence in other parts of the borough.
- Spotlight on domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.

The Committee had also recently had a meeting to consider a call-in which was on this Cabinet's agenda and a response had been sent to the Cabinet to consider. He noted that a different attempted call-in had not been accepted by the Monitoring Officer.

He also noted the late publication of agenda item 6.11 (Direct Award of Contract for Delivery of Covid-19 Asymptomatic Testing) and confirmed that OSC would be reviewing the issue at a later meeting.

The Mayor thanked Councillor James King for his update.

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

Cabinet 3 March 2021 – Agenda Item 6.2 – Outcome of consultation on revised approach to day support in adult social care.

The **Mayor** noted the response to the Call-in the Cabinet had received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing introduced the item and reported on the discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The meeting had heard from Members, officers and service users in a really good discussion. She confirmed that services would still be available for day service users with the new community hub model. She noted that the service users who attended did not wish to see change to the services. She then explained in more detail how the services would operate and confirmed her view that the proposals should proceed as planned.

The **Mayor** welcomed the update. He agreed that the proposals should proceed as planned. He stated that, if Cabinet agreed this action, then he would write to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a response including looking into some of the more detailed suggestions the Committee had made. He then put the recommendation to the vote and it was **agreed** without dissent. It was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the comments received in the submission of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
2. To reaffirm the decision taken at Cabinet on 3 March 2021.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Report

Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services and Education introduced the report. She welcomed the work of the Commission who were presenting the findings from a very thorough investigation and consultation exercise.

She highlighted that recent events including Black Lives Matter protests had highlighted the importance of this issue and that it was vital people from all backgrounds came together to tackle racism and inequality. The pandemic served as strong reminder of the impact of these inequalities.

The commission was looking at four key themes around education, health, community leadership and employment. The commission had worked with a very wide range of people and organisations including partners, service users, and residents.

She then took Cabinet through the findings in more detail and the proposed actions. This included; involving the community to ensure services met their needs, the importance of good data and the need for collaborative working amongst other issues. The report and action plan would be monitored annually by the partnership and they would have ownership of the activities.

The meeting heard a number of contributors who expressed concern as to whether the report recommendations sufficiently covered all the issues that had been raised with particular reference to:

- Concerns about institutional racism.
- Whether targets were specific enough or would happen quickly.
- Further community consultation, in community languages was required as not all groups had effectively been engaged in the review.
- The need to actively call out racist actions by organisations.
- The extent to which the Council as an organisation reflected its community.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and highlighted that it was a living document that needed to be taken on and developed by the Council and its partners. Cabinet Members spoke to welcome the report and highlighted positive areas set out such as the wide representation in community leadership roles, the work at schools, employment support and more. The wide range of testimony heard at the commission was noted and welcomed.

Cabinet thanked the commission for their hard work to prepare this report. It was noted how far the borough had come over the years but that there was still more to do and that the report, and the actions coming out of it, were an important part of this progress. It was also noted that further work needed to take place to create more detailed and specific actions under each of the broad areas set out in the report.

The **Mayor** noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses and proposed the recommendation as set out for the vote. This was **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the work the Commission has undertaken during the four-month period and agree the recommendations set out in the report.

6.2 Action Plan in Response to the Community Building Scrutiny Challenge Session

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report which was a response to the Scrutiny challenge session on premises charges and the community benefit rent reduction scheme. The report included an action plan to take the recommendations forward. Some of the recommendations had already been taken forward in other reports to Cabinet including the next two items on this meeting's agenda.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and the work that had been undertaken to simplify and standardise premises charging and arrangements. He noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses. He moved the recommendation for the vote and it was **agreed** without dissent. It was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the report (Appendix 1 to the report) of the scrutiny challenge session on the LBTH Premises Charges and Community Benefit Rent Reduction Scheme and agree the action plan (Appendix 2 to the report) in response to the report recommendations.

6.3 Community Hubs

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin, Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) – Lead on Social Inclusion, introduced the report on the Community Hubs. She highlighted the importance of ensuring communities

had spaces where they could come together to plan, play, debate, party etc and so this proposal was to source voluntary sector organisations to manage hubs for the borough's communities. These would be fantastic amenities to help communities flourish. She highlighted the importance of ensuring the hubs were welcoming to all communities. Finally, she thanked officers for their work in preparing the report.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. He noted the pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses. He moved the recommendations in the report for the vote and they were **agreed** without dissent. It was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the report,
2. To agree the core principles set out in para 3.12 of the report, and
3. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report.

6.4 Council Buildings Leased to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She explained that this was an update on the existing arrangements for leases to voluntary and community sector organisations to make them clearer and simpler whilst protecting the council's income. This includes where there was the ability to apply for rent relief and community benefit relief.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report as a good balance between supporting community organisations whilst also protecting the Council's income. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the revised Statement of Policy and Procedures relating to council premises leased to voluntary and community sector organisations set out at appendix A to the report, and
2. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report.

6.5 Action Plan in response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's 'Review of London Borough of Tower Hamlets' Response to COVID-19'

The **Mayor** introduced the report which was considering the action plan following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the borough's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The administration would be taking forward most of the recommendations and he considered that others were being tackled in other ways.

As well as the major challenges the pandemic had given the borough there were also some opportunities to take advantage of such as the increased use of digital technologies for communicating and accessing services.

He highlighted that the Council had a general emergency planning role for the borough more widely which was important in relation to crises such as this pandemic. He noted comments asking for more information on lessons learnt elsewhere and also that Scrutiny would continue to review this issue.

After discussion, the **Mayor** welcomed the review and also thanked everyone who had been involved in the borough's response to the pandemic. He then put the recommendations to the vote. They were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To consider the review (Appendix 1 to the report) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Review of London Borough of Tower Hamlets' Response to COVID-19 and
2. To agree the action plan (Appendix 2 to the report) in response to the review's recommendations.

6.6 Approval of the new Intermediate Housing Policy

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report setting out the proposed new intermediate housing policy which would allow priority access to different types of properties and schemes. The intention was to give residents access to more properties and to allow landlords to advertise their properties within the borough. Priority and criteria levels for different groups of residents were set out and this would be reviewed after a year of operation.

It was noted that the housing options service would be able to use this to highlight different accommodation options and that residents could also choose to be on the GLA's London-wide register.

The **Mayor** noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and then put the recommendations to the vote. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Intermediate Housing Policy and the localised priority matrix for the initial first three months of marketing all new Intermediate Housing Schemes within the Borough, irrespective of how these schemes have been funded.
2. To approve the delegation of authority to the Corporate Director of Place to amend the Intermediate Housing Register of Interest and the

prioritisation for Intermediate Housing products, (during the initial three months of marketing), in line with Government and regional priorities.

3. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

6.7 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Councillor Eve McQuillan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) – Lead on Planning, introduced the report. The intention of the extensive guidance was to help guide how expected planning obligation contributions were received in relation to development, for example around childcare placements, social housing, affordable workspaces, London living wage requirements, air quality, equal access open spaces and more.

She noted that the council had received a number of submissions in relation to developers of small numbers of properties. She set out that the guidance worked alongside the Local Plan. In that Plan the Council did look to push for affordable housing in small developments. She was therefore tabling an addendum to the report clarifying the Council's position in respect of the submissions.

During discussion it was noted how important it was to ensure that all residents were able to benefit from new developments, for example by using contributions to improve wider opportunities within the borough. The **Mayor** welcomed the report and, noting the addendum, put the recommendations to the vote, these were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Planning Obligations SPD (Appendix A and B to the report) for adoption, authorise officers to prepare an adoption statement and withdraw the current Planning Obligations SPD (2016) in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Regulations 14 and 15.
2. To authorise the Corporate Director of Place to make any necessary factual or minor editing changes prior to publishing the final Planning Obligations SPD.
3. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment as summarised in Paragraph 4 of the report (and included in Appendix C to the report).
4. To note the Consultation Statement summarising representations received during the public consultation and the responses to these representations as set out in Appendix D to the report.
5. To note the SEA Screening Statement as set out in Appendix E to the report.

6.8 London Dock School – Funding Agreement and Leases

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin, Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) – Lead on Social Inclusion, introduced the report. She explained that this report was to update Cabinet on ongoing discussions with the developer and Department for Education on the work to provide a new school on the site. She highlighted that the school was likely to be oversubscribed as there was high demand in that area. The report highlighted the potential risks, including financial risks, of the scheme but noted that these were anticipated to be low.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses. Noting the risks set out, he put the recommendations to the vote. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the position with respect to the current negotiations with the DfE concerning the funding for the construction of the London Dock School. including a number of consequential amendments to the respective suite of legal documents.
2. To approve the terms of both a Clawback Agreement, in respect of the under-lease for the London Dock School site, and the inclusion of a clawback clause within the Works Funding Agreement to be entered into between the Council and the DfE, as outlined in Section 7 of the report.
3. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Divisional Director of Legal Services to agree minor changes to the heads of terms as may be appropriate and to complete the legally binding clawback agreement
4. To note the financial risk to the Council and the mitigation set out in section 7 of the Report.

6.9 Contracts Forward Plan 2020/21 – Quarter Four

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She explained that this quarterly report provided an opportunity to review upcoming planning procurement exercises. Community benefits would be expected from all contractors.

The **Mayor** noted the report and that there had been no requests from Members to see detailed reported to be submitted to Cabinet on any particular proposed contracts. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses. He put the recommendations to the vote and they were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the contract summary at Appendix 1 to the report
2. To confirm that all contracts listed in Appendix 1 to the report can proceed to contract award after tender.
3. To authorise the Divisional of Legal to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts referred to at recommendation 2 above.
4. To note the procurement forward plan 2020-2022 schedule detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

6.10 Approval of extra spend on existing Northgate contract to bring customer and service benefits

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. The report was required to agree a request for additional spend in relation to the Northgate contract however, this spend was within the overall budget for the services.

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

RESOLVED

1. To approve purchase of items additional to the existing Northgate contract without subjecting the purchase to competition
2. To authorise the Corporate Director Resources to enter into such agreements as are necessary to carry out the purpose of this report.

6.11 Direct Award of Contract for Delivery of Covid-19 Asymptomatic Testing

Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, introduced the report. She noted the reasons for urgency for considering the report that the GLA had only recently informed the Council of the requirement to undertake this contract award and it was important that the contract was agreed so that this testing could continue.

During discussion it was noted that the report also set out how the arrangements would be reviewed over coming months. The contract was based on an estimated uptake of tests.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report and put the recommendations and reasons for urgency to the vote. The report was **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the Council's plans for delivering asymptomatic community testing in Tower Hamlets, which aligns with the requirements set out in 'Roadmap out of Lockdown' published by Government on 22nd February 2021;
2. To agree to make a Direct Award of a 1+1+1 contract (months) for the delivery of the borough's Asymptomatic Test Sites (ATSS) to Hub Logistics for the period 12th April to 4th July 2021.

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 7.59 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS