

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE CABINET****HELD AT 5.31 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 28 APRIL 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 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 James King	

Officers Present:

Dr Somen Banerjee	(Director of Public Health)
Adam Boey	(Senior Strategy & Policy Manager - Corporate)
Ann Corbett	(Divisional Director, Community Safety)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Hitesh Jolapara	(Interim Divisional Director, Finance, Procurement & Audit)
Pauline Maddison	(Interim Director, Education and Partnerships)
Calvin McLean	Head of Neighbourhood (Operations)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
David Tolley	(Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services and Education.
- Kevin Bartle, Interim Corporate Director, Resources for whom Hitesh Jolapara, Interim Director of Finance was deputising.
- Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community for whom Somen Banerjee, Director of Public Health was deputising.
- Sharon Godman, Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillors Asma Islam and Motin Uz-Zaman declared pecuniary interests in relation to Agenda Item 6.3 (Future of the Private Rented Sector Housing Selective Licensing Designation) due to owning properties which they rented out near the boundary of the scheme. They left the meeting for the duration of that item.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24 March 2021 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The **Mayor** made the following announcements:

- He noted that today was the International Workers Memorial Day commemorating workers who had suffered through the Covid-19 crisis. The Council had particularly commemorated its own staff who had died or been impacted.
- The work to vaccinate residents and support a suppression of the virus was continuing.

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 – Strategic Plan 2021-24
- 6.2 – Tower Hamlets Plan Annual Report and priorities going forward
- 6.3 – Future of the private rented sector housing selective licensing designation

- 6.4 – Proposal for the introduction of the borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
- 6.7 – GP Enhanced Public Health Services – Direct Award

These were considered during discussion of the relevant items.

In addition, Councillor James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided Cabinet with an update on his committee's recent meeting. He reported that they had considered a number of issues including:

- An update on progress against the Covid-19 virus including an update on the impact on schools and whether surge testing may be a feature in the near future.
- The annual Mayor's spotlight looking at the challenges the council is facing. They noted the continued emphasis on partnership working especially given the challenges of austerity.
- Considered the Scrutiny Annual Report summarising the work of the Committee over the year. The final report will be presented to a meeting of Council.

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

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

It was noted that there had been a call-in of Agenda Item 6.1 (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Report) from the last Cabinet meeting and this would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during May. Any referral back to Cabinet would therefore be considered at a future meeting.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Strategic Plan 2021-24

The Mayor introduced the report setting out the Council's Strategic Plan for 2021-24. This is one of the key documents that sets out the Council's targets and priorities. The plan has been updated to include progress and achievements since the last strategic plan and the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, responded to the report and, in particular, thanked all staff for their work in responding to the pandemic and the different challenges it had brought. He highlighted how the plan had been updated to put more emphasis on recovery and working with partners to reflect resident needs with health being a top priority as indicated by surveys of residents. There were also other priorities such as climate change, jobs, supporting vulnerable residents and housing.

The Mayor welcomed the plan and the priorities set out. The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted, particularly noting the role of target setting, metrics and monitoring.

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

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Strategic Plan for 2021-24 (Appendix 1 to the report), including revised actions and outcome measures that reflect the council's continued COVID-19 response and move to recovery;
2. To note that Directorates will develop business plans containing actions that deliver strategic priorities, including Strategic Plan outcomes and corporate equalities objectives; and
3. To delegate to Divisional Director Strategy, Policy & Performance to finalise the Plan following consultation with the Mayor.

6.2 Tower Hamlets Plan Annual Report and priorities going forward

The Mayor introduced the Tower Hamlets Plan Annual Report. He explained that this Plan, setting out priorities for the next few years, was owned by the Tower Hamlets Partnership which is a body including many local organisations. It is an important plan to bring together these agencies to tackle the biggest issues such as crime, employment, health and wellbeing and similar. He highlighted how important the partnership was in supporting the borough.

Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, highlighted how the partners across Tower Hamlets had pulled together through the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly the work on health, for example by reducing the pressure on hospitals. Other examples included enforcement work undertaken with the police and a wide range of collaboration projects. The Council facilitates the partnership but there are lots of vital partners involved.

It was noted that the Partnership were particularly monitoring the longer-term impacts of the pandemic and looking to see what the Partnership could do to help.

The **Mayor** noted the pre-decision scrutiny questions and officer responses and then moved the recommendations as set out, they were **agreed** without dissent, and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the content of the Tower Hamlets Plan Annual Report 2021 and progress against outcome measures.
2. To note and comment on the partnership priorities going forward to support the recovery of the borough.

6.3 Future of the Private Rented Sector Housing Selective Licensing Designation

Note – Councillors Asma Islam and Motin Uz-Zaman left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Councillor Eve McQuillan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) – Lead on Planning, introduced the report. She explained that the proposal was to continue the selective licensing scheme in three areas of the borough as set out in the report. The scheme had been in place since 2016 and had been really important in improving standards in the private rental sector. The report set out why these areas were being considered for the scheme although benefits were being seen through a wider area.

A consultation had been run which showed that a large majority of landlords were not in favour but a significant majority of tenants were in favour and the Council considered that it was important to be supportive of tenants.

During discussion it was noted that, following a request, it was proposed to exclude purpose-built student accommodation where they were already regulated by the Accreditation Network UK. It was also noted that the scheme boundaries related to the old boundaries of Weavers, Whitechapel and Spitalfields and Banglatown Wards and it was considered these were still the appropriate boundaries for the scheme.

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

RESOLVED

1. To agree the option to renew (redesignate) the current Licensing Scheme in operation within; Weavers, Whitechapel and Spitalfields and Banglatown area (pre 2014 ward boundaries) that is due to come to an end on 30th September 2021 for a further five years.
2. To agree to exclude the Students Accommodation Blocks that are regulated by the Accreditation Network UK (ANUK) which are currently included within the scope of the current scheme.
3. To agree to delegate to the Head of the Environmental Health and Trading Standards to make minor administrative and delivery adjustments as and when required.
4. To agree to approve/endorse the revised Licensing conditions/fees and amenities / accommodation standards to achieve consistency and transparency as may be required on a case by case basis.

6.4 **Proposal for the introduction of the borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to deal with the possession and use of psychoactive substances (e.g. nitrous oxide) and associated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Faith and Equalities, introduced the report on the proposed introduction of a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order to deal with the use of psychoactive substances (nitrous oxide) and related anti-social behaviour. This is an issue that residents regularly highlight as a problem that needed tackling.

The report shows how big the problem is and the level of public support for enacting the order – which was over 90% from the consultation. The plan was to work with support services to engage and encourage change and only enforce as a last resort to avoid unnecessarily criminalising young people.

During discussion it was noted how important it was to be sensitive to the impact on young people of the Order and how working with them to avoid formal enforcement was the aim of the plan. This project would involve a number of partners including the police and Tower Hamlets Homes who would meet regularly to monitor its effectiveness.

The **Mayor** thanked officers for their work on this issue. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses. He then moved the recommendations as set out, these were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note that the findings of the public consultation within Appendix C to the report, which ended on 15th February 2021, indicate overwhelming support for the introduction of a boroughwide Public Spaces Protection Order.
2. Exercising the power under section 59 of the Antisocial Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014, to agree to make a boroughwide Public Spaces Protection Order to deal with antisocial behaviour and nuisance linked to the recreational use of psychoactive substances, e.g. nitrous oxide, with the prohibitions set out in Appendix A to the report for a period of 3 years, expiring on 27th April 2024.

6.5 **The proposal for the amalgamation of Ben Jonson Primary and Harry Roberts Nursery Schools from 1st January 2022**

The Mayor introduced the report proposing the amalgamation of Ben Johnson Primary School and Harry Roberts Nursery School. The changes should help secure the nursery provision and also helps in the transition for children from nursery to primary school. The consultation showed the change was overwhelmingly supported. He moved the recommendations as set out and they were **agreed** without dissent. It was:

RESOLVED

1. To agree for the publication of a statutory notice for 28 days, in respect of the proposal to amalgamate Ben Jonson Primary and Harry Roberts Nursery schools into an all-through 3 to 11 years' primary school. This would take effect from 1st January 2022.
2. To note the findings from the Equalities Assessment, attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

6.6 Report on outcome of the stage one consultation on the proposal to establish an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) provision at Hermitage Primary School.

The Mayor introduced the report on proposals to establish an Autism Spectrum Condition provision at Hermitage Primary School. He noted the outcome of the first stage consultation exercise which showed support for the move. Agreement of this report would result in the proposals moving to the next stage which was a statutory notice which could then lead to formal agreement to the proposals. It was noted that this should have no negative impact on the school's ability to provide any other education services.

The issue would not be returning to cabinet following the statutory notice.

The **Mayor** moved the recommendations as set out and they were **agreed** without dissent. It was:

RESOLVED

1. To agree to move to the publication of a Statutory Notice for 28 days, in respect of the proposal to alter Hermitage Primary School with effect from 1st September 2021
2. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment set out in Section 4 of the report and attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

6.7 GP Enhanced Public Health Services – Direct Award

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing introduced the report on a proposed direct contract award for GP Enhanced services in areas such as sexual health and substance misuse these were in addition to the core GP contract commissioned by the NHS. The enhanced services were paid for through the public health grant.

A direct award is only considered in exceptional circumstances and this is considered such as situation as only GPs could provide these services.

The **Mayor** welcomed the report. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses in particular the importance of monitoring

performance. Then he moved the recommendations as set out. These were **agreed** without dissent and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the recommendation for direct award of a contractual agreement to the Tower Hamlets GP Care Group Community Interest Company (CIC) for the delivery of the Public Health NIS services for 3 years from 1st July 2021 with the option to extend for another three years on a yearly basis with a maximum annual value of £932,874 and total value £5,597,244 for the life of the contract.
2. To authorise the Director of Public Health to enter into all necessary agreements.
3. To note that funding for the Public Health NIS Services will be met within the Public Health Grants budgets for the life of the contract.
4. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in 4.1 and 4.2 of the report.

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 6.41 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS