

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.34 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2021

**C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members present in person:

Mayor John Biggs	
Councillor Rachel Blake	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Work, Economic Growth and Faith)
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm – (Job Share post as part of Social Inclusion and Public Realm portfolio)

Members in attendance remotely:

Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Sport)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	(Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion (Job Share post as part of the Social Inclusion and Public Realm Portfolio)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Housing)
Councillor Asma Islam	(Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning)
Councillor Sirajul Islam	(Cabinet Member for Community Safety)

Other Councillors present in person:

Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
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Other Councillors in attendance remotely:

Councillor Mohammed Pappu	(Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
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Officers present in person:

Jane Abraham	(Head of Capital Delivery)
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

Officers in attendance remotely:

Kevin Bartle	(Interim Corporate Director, Resources and Section 151 Officer)
Terry Bryan	(Service Head (Pupil Access and School Sufficiency))
Mohammed Chibou	(Principal Transport Planner)
Thorsten Dreyer	(Head of Intelligence and Performance)
Sharon Godman	(Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Steven Heywood	(Planning Officer, Plan Making Team)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Dan Jones	(Director, Public Realm)
Marc Acton-Filion	(Planning Officer (Plan Making Team))
Peter Maskell	(Interim Head of Procurement)
Clare Matthews	(Strategy & Policy Manager)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Marissa Ryan-Hernandez	(Plan Making Team Leader)
Karen Swift	(Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Nisar Visram	(Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit)
Lola Williams	ALMO Client Officer

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, Councillor Rachel Blake and Councillor Asma Begum noted for transparency that they live (and for Cllr Blake owned a property) in the area referenced in Agenda Item 6.7 (Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan).

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 27 October 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor made a number of announcements including:

- Noting the Secretary of State had upheld the recommendations to refuse the Westferry Print Works planning application.

- The Tower Hamlets Partnership had adopted a 'Net Zero' policy. The Council was looking to be net zero by 2025 with a net zero borough by 2045.
- Tomorrow was 'White Ribbon day' to highlight male violence against women and the need to promise to tackle it wherever it is found.
- The Council had successfully secured levelling up funding for the Whitechapel High Street area.
- Members and officers were working hard to support residents of Clare House who were being decanted by Clarion Housing whilst urgent works were undertaken to make the block safe.

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 the following agenda items:

- 6.1 Digital Inclusion Strategy
- 6.2 Liveable Streets Brick Lane
- 6.3 Strategic Delivery and Performance Reporting
- 6.4 Additions to the Capital Programme
- 6.5 Budget Monitoring report
- 6.7 Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan
- 6.9 Planning for school places

These were considered during discussion of the relevant items.

In addition, Councillor Mohammed Pappu, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided an update on his Committee's meeting earlier in the week. In particular, he reported that:

- There had been a useful session with the Mayor on the Council's Strategic Delivery and Performance reporting.
- There had been a spotlight on waste and recycling with the Lead Member for Environment and Planning. A number of recommendations have been produced from this session for the Executive to consider.
- The Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector had joined them for a review of the Council's Budget Monitoring position. The Committee reiterated its request to be more involved in preparation for the Council's draft budget each year.
- The Committee have agreed a report and recommendations following a review of swimming provision which took place in September. The Service was now developing an action plan in response.

The Mayor thanked him for his update.

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

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Tower Hamlets Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion (Job Share – as part of the wider Social Inclusion and Public Realm portfolio), introduced the report on the Council's digital inclusion strategy. She highlighted how the Covid-19 pandemic had shown how digital was now firmly at the heart of all activities. However, access to these tools was not equal and whilst a lot of support was available there were gaps which needed to be tackled.

The group had looked at issues from a number of angles including looking at poverty and challenges within some ethnic communities and identified four key reasons for low access being; access, skills, motivation and trust. The group identified a number of actions which have been added to the plan set out in the report.

The Mayor and Members welcomed the report and the input from the council and partners and thanked the officers who had led on the work. He noted that it was important to continue to work to make systems accessible from simple devices such as mobile phones. The need to support older people to access digital systems was also particularly highlighted.

The Mayor noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. These were unanimously agreed by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To agree the partnership Digital Inclusion Strategy and priorities within the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.
2. To note the comments of finance regarding partnership funding and the growth bid.

6.2 Liveable Streets Brick Lane review outcome report

Councillor Kahar Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm (Job Share as part of the wider Social Inclusion and Public Realm Portfolio), introduced the report following a review of the Brick Lane Liveable Streets Scheme. Amendments to the existing scheme were proposed following this review including removing three of the original road closures. It was noted that significant majorities of businesses responding to the consultation opposed these road closures. The public realm improvements were to continue along with the school streets and two remaining road closures and that this would provide a good scheme to improve the street scene in this area whilst supporting local businesses.

Finally, he thanked officers for their hard work on the review and the report presented to Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor Peter Golds, Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the changes to the scheme and in particular that the changes should improve the traffic levels on the Chicksand Estate.

The Mayor welcomed the report and that the Council had listened to consultation feedback to improve the existing scheme. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. These were agreed unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the removal of the southern-most closures which include the following:
 - Brick Lane between Chicksand Street and Fashion Street
 - Brick Lane between Fournier Street and Princelet Street
 - Brick Lane between Princelet Street and Hanbury Street
2. To approve the amendment of closure times for the remaining closures to 12pm-11pm Saturday and Sunday.
3. To approve the restoration of one way east bound operation to Fournier Street and the one way east bound operation of the western section of Princelet Street between Wilkes Street and Brick Lane.
4. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment and specific equalities considerations summarised in paragraph 4 of the report and the full Equalities impact Analysis (EqIA) detailed in Appendix B to the report; and
5. To approve the use of an Experimental Traffic Order for the amended scheme design to allow any objections, comments or observations to be made before a review is undertaken within 18 months of its implementation.

6.3 Strategic delivery and performance reporting – Q2 2021/22

The Mayor introduced the regular update report on performance against the Council's strategic delivery targets. He noted that the report had been discussed at Overview and Scrutiny earlier in the week.

He noted the steady progress against the majority of indicators but that not all the stretching targets were being met. The Covid-19 pandemic had also had an impact on council performance. He welcomed the general direction of travel whilst continuing to push for improvements where necessary.

He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and proposed the recommendations as set out. These were agreed unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the strategic delivery and performance report for quarter 2 of 2021/22;
2. To note that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on service delivery in some parts of the council;
3. To note the performance of the strategic measures, including those measures where the minimum expectation has been missed.

6.4 Additions to the Approved Capital Programme 2021-22 to 2023-24

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing (with special responsibility for Capital Delivery), introduced the report proposing additions to the Approved Capital Programme for 2021-22 to 2023-24. She explained the Council agreed an overall scheme as part of the budget process but that specific schemes are also brought forward throughout the year when funding has been identified. These schemes will support the Council's objectives to create a healthy and sustainable community. She then took Cabinet through the specific schemes in turn.

Finally, she noted the rising construction costs which were causing problems to various schemes.

The Mayor welcomed the report and highlighted a number of particular schemes and the benefits they would bring to the borough. He also noted comments about how the various traffic calming and street improvements proposed will make the Bow area safer for road users. The recycling improvements were also welcomed.

The Mayor welcomed the report and the impact the various schemes will have to the borough. He thanked officers for their hard work and finally he noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses.

The Mayor proposed the recommendations as set out. These were approved unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the inclusion of the additional capital schemes and amendments to existing capital schemes, as set out in the report, into the council's 2021-2024 Approved Capital Programme
2. To note the funding sources for the additional schemes being added to the Approved Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24
3. To agree that approval to proceed to award contracts for works and services be delegated to the Corporate Director of Place, in

consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources, subject to approval through the capital governance process and tenders being within the approved capital estimate.

6.5 Budget monitoring report 2021-22 as at 30th September 2021 (period 6)

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector introduced the regular budget monitoring report. She began by highlighting the challenges being faced due to cuts in government funding, the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of Brexit. The overall position was currently of an end of year £300k deficit. However, there were significant uncertainties in those figures. She took Cabinet through more details on the budget including reserves levels (much already allocated). The savings target for the year had been revised to £20 million with some more savings identified for future years.

She highlighted the importance of stability of funding and that detail was currently awaited on government funding. The government was also expecting that the council would be raising its council tax by the maximum allowed percentage increases over the coming years.

Finally, she highlighted the good news stories of the various capital projects planned across the borough.

Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing highlighted the expected additional £4 million of costs should current NHS patient discharge funding comes to an end as planned.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ronald for her presentation of the report and officers for their work. He noted the concerns over future funding levels including around adult social care and noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Question and officer response and proposed the recommendations as set out. These were unanimously agreed by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the Council's projected outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget, Housing Revenue Account and earmarked reserves for 2021-22, based on forecasts as at 30th September 2021;
2. To note the reserves position of the Council is uncertain pending the closure of the statement of accounts for the period 2016 – 2021;
3. To note the Council's projected outturn position against General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programme approved budgets, based on forecasts as at 30th September 2021;
4. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

6.6 Contracts Forward Plan 2021/22 – Quarter Three

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She drew Cabinet's attention to the contracts set out in the appendices to the report.

The Mayor welcomed the report and confirmed that all reports in Appendix 1 could proceed to contract award after tender. He proposed the recommendations on that basis. These were unanimously agreed by Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the contract summary at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. To agree that all listed contracts proceed to contract award after tender.
3. To authorise the relevant Corporate Director to approve the execution of all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts referred to at recommendation 2 above.
4. To note the procurement forward plan 2021-2025 schedule detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

6.7 Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan – Validation of Submission

Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning introduced the report. She explained that the purpose of the report was to confirm that the Neighbourhood Plan was compliant with the necessary legal requirements and should be put forward for a final consultation before being submitted to the inspector for examination.

The Mayor noted the introduction and the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses. He also noted concerns about how some residents undertook their campaigning during referenda relating to Neighbourhood Plans. He moved the recommendations as set out in the report, these were unanimously approved by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan to be submitted for examination, on the basis that it is compliant with the necessary regulations under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulations 2012.
2. To authorise the Divisional Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, to provide comments on behalf of the Council on the submission version of the neighbourhood plan during the Regulation 16 publicity period.
3. To agree that the Council should proceed to appoint an examiner of the neighbourhood plan with the consent of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum.
4. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment considerations as set out in Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the report.

6.8 Building Safety Management Shadow Framework

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report providing a shadow framework for building safety management. This had been prepared in relation to the Building Safety Act which was working through parliament and expected to become law next year. The report and the legislation set out clear responsibilities for owners of buildings above a certain height. The shadow framework will enable preparatory work to be undertaken and then the framework will be amended to match the final legislation. It was important to engage with residents over any safety issues in their blocks.

It was noted that building owners other than the Council would also have responsibilities under the Act so they would also need to start preparing. A new information page on the Council website would help them prepare.

The Mayor welcomed the report as this was an extremely important issue that needed tackling and it was important to identify the accountable body for each building. He proposed the recommendations as set out and these were unanimously agreed by the Members present. It was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the LBTH/THH's Shadow (Residential) Building Safety Framework as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report, noting that it is an interim framework which is subject to change pending the Building Safety Bill progressing through Parliament.
2. To approve delegated authority for Corporate Director of Place to recruit to the new Council role of Building Safety Lead (Client Team).
3. To appoint THH as the Interim Building Safety Manager.
4. To note that in due course amendments will be required to the Council's Constitution to delegate appropriate responsibilities to the Building Safety Lead (Client Team).
5. To note that any required budget to fund the new building safety roles will be applied for through the budget setting process.
6. To consider a further report on the recommended final (Residential) Building Safety Framework pending the Building Safety Bill passing through the final stages in Parliament or when the requirements of the impending Act become clear.

6.9 Planning for School Places 2021/22 Review and Recommendations

Councillor Asma Begum, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities, introduced the report setting out the planning for school places for 2021/22 and subsequent years. She highlighted that actions were being taken to reduce the number of spaces, such as through school mergers and closures, where there was a surplus and that new provision was being developed in areas of high demand.

In particular, new primary places were required in the East of the borough. Plans were also in place for new secondary school places at London Docks and Westferry Printworks amongst other projects. George Green School was also being redeveloped.

The report included recommendations around the merger of Old Church Nursery and Marion Richardson Primary school. It was noted that there were some particular challenges in relation to pupil place planning, for example around new housing provision and the impact of Brexit. Officers and school leaders were thanked for their engagement in often difficult conversations. The challenge of providing enough spaces in the East of the borough was also noted.

The Mayor welcomed the report. He noted the Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses and proposed the recommendations as set out. These were unanimously agreed by Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To note the latest five to seven year pupil place projections for the Tower Hamlets area, prepared in conjunction with the Greater London Authority and in consultation with neighbouring local authorities;
2. To note the progress made and latest position in relation to:
 - supply of primary school places in the borough;
 - the plans and options for future school developments to meet the need for additional primary places in the east of the borough;
 - the progress of the development of the new Mulberry Academy Secondary School at London Dock for September 2023;
 - the progress of the development of the site at Westferry Printworks to serve as a new building for Canary Wharf College 3 Free School;
 - the progress and plans for the rebuild of George Green's Secondary School;
3. To agree the recommendation for a statutory notice to be issued for the proposed amalgamation (merger) of Old Church Nursery and Marion Richardson Primary Schools (paras 3.26-3.32 of the report).
4. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 5 and Appendix 3 to the report.
5. To note that the content of this report aligns with the functions of the council as a Local Planning Authority, and the approach taken to make best use of the current allocation of school sites in the Local Plan.

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 7.16 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS