

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.32 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2022

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

Members Present in person:

Mayor John Biggs	
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities (Statutory Deputy Mayor))
Councillor Rachel Blake	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
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 Virtually

Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Sports)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	(Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion (Job Share as part of the wider 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)
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)

Officers Present in Person:

Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Allister Bannin	(Head of Strategic and Corporate Finance)
Kevin Bartle	(Corporate Director, Resources & Section 151 Officer)
Katie Cole	(Associate Director of Public Health)
Sharon Godman	(Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Keith Stanger	(Head of Safer Neighbourhood Operations)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Nisar Visram	(Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman (Cabinet Member for Work, Economic Growth and Faith).

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 15 December 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:

- The Cabinet meeting on 23 February had been cancelled.
- He had visited the refurbished Tiller Leisure Centre and work was ongoing to look at York Hall Pool. A report is due on provision of leisure generally.
- The Council were monitoring the potential relaxation of Covid-19 rules but the continuing vaccination programme was still really important as was the provision of covid tests.
- The Council was well on the way to meeting its school streets target which was important for quality of life of local residents and pupils.
- There was a lot of positive work ongoing to meet the Council's climate commitments.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions**

There were no Pre-decision Scrutiny Questions.

Note – Scrutiny will be reviewing the 2022-23 Budget Report on Monday 24 January 2022.

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

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Mayor's Foreword to the Council's Budget Report

This item was taken alongside Agenda Item 6.2 (The Council's 2022-23 Budget Report) and the combined minute is presented under that item.

RESOLVED

1. To note the Mayor's Foreword to the Council's Budget Report.

6.2 The Council's 2022-23 Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-25

The item was considered alongside Agenda Item 6.1 (Mayor's Foreword to the Council's Budget Report) and the combined minute is presented here.

The Mayor introduced both reports. He highlighted that this report began the Council's formal budget review process whereby the Budget would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The comments of the Scrutiny Committee would then be considered at the next Cabinet meeting. He noted that there may need to be further amendments at that second Cabinet meeting. Finally, a meeting of Council would agree the Budget and Council Tax for the authority.

Looking at the report he highlighted a number of issues including:

- A lot of work had gone into the proposals.
- There were still considerable financial pressures for cuts whilst there were also increasing demands on key services such as adult and children's social care.
- There were also some proposals for investment in areas such as CCTV and delivering new Council housing.
- There were proposals to tackle the climate emergency.
- The need to deal with changes brought about by the pandemic.

Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, then took Members through the budget proposals in more detail. She highlighted the overarching goal of ensuring a fairer, cleaner and safer Tower Hamlets. She noted a number of points including:

- The Local Government Funding Settlement in December had provided an increase in funding for the Council but that this was only for one year and there was significant uncertainty beyond that which also extended to other income streams such as Business Rates and the New Homes Bonus.
- A one year budget was being proposed this year rather than the usual three year plan due to this uncertainty.
- It was proposed to freeze the Council Tax with the exception of a 1% increase for social care.
- £5.4 million of surplus was available to meet resident priorities as identified in the recent consultation.

- The Council was looking to make use of a number of new and continuing grant areas.
- Some new savings were proposed in the report and a few previous savings are being written off as unachievable.
- Rent and service charge increases for tenants were set out and work on fire safety was also set out.

Summing up, she highlighted how pleased she was that this year the number of proposed cuts was limited and there were proposals for increases in other areas. She thanked the Mayor and everyone for the excellent budget proposals that were set out.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Candida Ronald for her presentation. He proposed that the draft budget be submitted to Scrutiny. He proposed the recommendations as set out. This was agreed unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To propose a General Fund Revenue Funding Requirement of £383.551m for 2022-23 subject to any remaining changes arising from the final Local Government Finance Settlement, which includes a surplus of £5.413m in 2022-23 which will be allocated to one-off projects.
2. To approve the Council Tax Base calculation for 2022-23 and agree that authority to approve this in future years is delegated to the Section 151 Officer.
3. To propose to freeze the Tower Hamlets element of Council Tax and to only levy a 1% Adult Social Care precept for 2022-23. This will result in a Band D Council Tax of £1,146.54 (Council share) 2022-23 to be referred to Full Council for approval.
4. To propose that the Interim Corporate Director – Resources, after consultation with the Mayor and Lead Member of Resources, makes any changes required to the budget following the final settlement announcement.
5. To note that the Council is joining the 8 Authority Pool for Business Rates with seven other London Local Authorities for 2022-23 and note that delegated authority has been given to the Section 151 Officer to implement the Council's inclusion in the pool.
6. To approve the 2022-23 transfers to and from reserves as set out in paragraph 3.9 of the report.
7. To approve the continuation of £1m funding from the Public Health grant to the Key Stage Two extension of Free School Meals.

8. To approve that the increase in the Social Care Grant for 2022-23 is allocated in full to the services (75% to adult social care and 25% to children's social care).
9. To propose the 2022-23 Housing Revenue Account budget as set out in Appendix 7 to be referred to Full Council for approval.
10. To approve the HRA housing rent and service charge increases as outlined in section 3.11.
11. To approve the 2022-23 Management Fee payable to Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) of £33.236m as set out in paragraph 3.11.16 of the report.
12. To note that under the Management Agreement between the Council and THH, THH manages delegated HRA income and expenditure budgets on behalf of the Council. In 2022-23, THH will manage delegated income budgets totalling £98.842m and delegated expenditure budgets totalling £32.128m.
13. To propose the 2022-23 Schools Budget.
14. To agree that the National Schools Funding Formula (NSFF) adopted by Tower Hamlets originally in 2019-20 continues for 2022-23. The only changes included are increases to the factor values in line with the NSFF and the use of the mobility factor in the NSFF for the first time.
15. To agree that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (the mechanism that guarantees schools a minimum uplift in per-pupil funding) is set as close as possible to 2.0%, the maximum allowed after consideration for growth and factor changes in School allocations.
16. To agree that the structure of the Early Years Funding Formula remains unchanged except that the two year old hourly rates will increase in line with the Early Years National Funding Formula.
17. To note that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme will remain unchanged for 2022-23.
18. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment and specific equalities considerations as set out in Section 4 of the report.

6.3 Fees and Charges 2022-23

Councillor Candida Ronald, the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, introduced the report. She noted that this annual report included statutory and discretionary charges although only discretionary charges were for agreement.

Factors such as the impact of Covid have been taken into account when setting out proposed fees and charges. Generally, the proposals were for increases in line with inflation but some were increasing by more than that or were being frozen.

The Mayor noted that there may be some fine tuning delegated to officers and there were also consultation exercises needed in some cases which also involved some delegations for final decisions. He proposed the recommendations as set out, these were unanimously agreed by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the proposed changes to discretionary fees and charges as detailed in the appendices, subject to the conditions set out in Recommendation 4.
2. To approve new discretionary fees and charges as detailed in the appendices, subject to the conditions set out in Recommendation 4.
3. To note the revised statutory fees and charges as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.
4. To note the Equalities Implications as set out in Section 4 of the report and that, where it is highlighted in section 4.5 that a proposed fee or charge requires a full Equality Impact Analysis (EIA), this EIA will be undertaken prior to the introduction of the change to the respective fee or charge.
5. To approve delegation for amendments to fees and charges, including those to take account of the result of EIAs, to the relevant Corporate Director in liaison with the Lead Member and the Mayor.
6. To approve the commencement of the consultation process in respect of Street Trading fees and charges. To delegate the consideration of any representations and the determination of the decision to the relevant Corporate Director in liaison with the Lead Member and the Mayor prior to introduction of any change in fees and charges.

6.4 Approval of the Partnership Agreement for the Child Death Review Service

Councillor Asma Begum, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities, introduced the report asking for approval of a partnership agreement for the Child Death Review Service. It was important that child deaths were reviewed to help learn what happened and why with the aim of reducing future deaths. New statutory requirements on the number of reviews that must take place mean a partnership is the best way of achieving this. Cabinet approval is required to join the partnership.

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

RESOLVED

1. To approve that the London Borough of Tower Hamlets joins the Child Death Review Partnership, as set out in the report under which the London Borough of Newham will undertake the relevant statutory functions on behalf of Tower Hamlets.
2. To Authorise the Director of Legal Services to approve and sign the Partnership Agreement.

6.5 CCTV Transformation Procurement – Synectics Graphical User Interface (GUI) software upgrade.

The reasons for urgency set out below were agreed.

“This report was published after the statutory deadline for the 18 January Cabinet meeting. This item is first in the procurement critical path for the overall corporate CCTV Transformation Programme.

There is a need to fast-track a direct award given there is only one single-supplier, the overall tight delivery timescales being working to and the need to ensure there is no break in service provision in order to maintain continuity for all Council and partner services that utilise public space CCTV in Tower Hamlets.”

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, introduced the report on proposed procurement to improve the Council’s CCTV systems. He highlighted that CCTV helped to make local people feel safe. A 1040 camera network was operated across the borough by the Council and this procurement would dramatically improve the quality of the cameras and infrastructure to future proof the service. The changes will also allow the Council to better share images with partners which will also help make the borough safer.

The Mayor welcomed the report and the improvements the procurement would bring. He also highlighted that in addition to its own network, the Council also worked closely with its partners and the CCTV networks that they owned. He proposed the recommendations as set out and these were agreed unanimously by the Members present and it was:

RESOLVED

1. To approve option one (see paragraph 3.10 of the report) which is the recommendation for a direct award, following publication of a VEAT (Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency Notice) under Regulation 32, in respect of the upgrade of the CCTV graphical user interface (GUI) software.

2. To note the specific risks relating to recommendation
3. To authorise the Corporate Director Health Adults and Communities to enter into any and all appropriate contracts to give effect to recommendation 1.

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 6.07 p.m.

MAYOR JOHN BIGGS