

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.03 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2022

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

Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	Councillor Kabir Hussain
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Councillor Kamrul Hussain
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Councillor Shubo Hussain
Councillor Leelu Ahmed	Councillor Asma Islam
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Saied Ahmed	Councillor Ahmodul Kabir
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Councillor Ahmodur Khan
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Sabina Khan
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Amy Lee
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Abdul Malik
Councillor Maisha Begum	Councillor Abdul Mannan
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	Councillor Ana Miah
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	Councillor Amin Rahman
Councillor Jahed Choudhury	Councillor Rebaka Sultana
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	Councillor Maium Talukdar
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury	Councillor Bellal Uddin
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Abdul Wahid
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	

Members Present Virtually:

Councillor Rachel Blake
Councillor James King

SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR**The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Shafi Ahmed in the Chair**

The Speaker of the Council provided his update to the Council. He advised that he was pleased to have been able to participate in many events and activities in the community over the last couple of months.

Passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

The Speaker reported that he had attended various community events to mark the passing of the Queen and expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to all involved. He had attended a memorial service at All Saints in Poplar, which included representatives from the Council, the inter faith forum and the local community. He then asked those present to join him in standing for a two minute silence to remember the late Queen.

He had led the proclamation of King Charles III. He wished the new King every success as he took on his role.

Other highlights included:

- The Council's parks and open spaces service had won an award for City of the Year 2022 at the London in Bloom awards ceremony, which was hosted in the Borough.
- He had attended the Asian restaurant and takeaway awards, an industry which was very important to the borough. He was delighted once again to see Tower Hamlets businesses being nominated.
- He had met various community groups and organisations at annual events and celebrations and had also enjoyed getting to know more civic colleagues from other boroughs

Finally, he wished to pay tribute to the young men who had rescued residents from a fire at Bentworth Court, Bethnal Green; Sakariye, Zakariya and Saeed. He commended their bravery and thanked them for their selfless actions.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Suluk Ahmed.

Apologies for lateness were received by Councillor Rachel Blake.

It was noted that due to exceptional circumstances Councillor James King was joining the meeting remotely.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Following the receipt of a written request from a significant number of Members, the Monitoring Officer had agreed, in line with the Member Code of

Conduct, to grant a general dispensation to all Councillors on Agenda Item 8 'Opposition Motion for Debate on Support for Small Businesses in the Face of the Energy Bill Crisis' as without the dispensation a large number of Members would have to declare a Pecuniary Interest and leave the room for the debate and this would impede the 'transaction of the business' as well as 'impact the representation of the different political groups on the body conducting the business so as to alter the outcome of any vote on the matter'.

Councillor Shubo Hussain declared a non-disclosable non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10.1 'Spitalfields Neighbourhood Plan' as he had a coffee shop on the boundary of the respective area.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on Wednesday 27 July 2022 be approved and signed by the Speaker as a correct record of proceedings.

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive provided his regular update regarding the following issues:

- The Council would be marking the following events and milestones in the coming weeks
 - Black History Month in October,
 - National Customer Services Week
 - National Hate Crime Week
 - World Mental Health Day on 10th October.
- Preparations were well advanced for the Bow Neighbourhood Planning Referendum. Polling day would be Thursday 13 October 2022.
- Matthew Eady, the new Director of Children's Commissioning and Culture, would join the Council on 1 November 2022.
- He congratulated staff across Tower Hamlets, and particularly those in the Council, who received awards in the inaugural THT integrated care awards on 29 September and announced that the Team of specialist Teachers of the Deaf had been nominated for a Barts Health Allied Health Profession Day Award.
- The Council had received 8 gold awards at the London in Bloom awards for 2022 on 21 September, including the Large Park Award for Victoria Park and large cemetery, heritage and conservation awards for Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. The Council was named category winner for Town/City of the Year.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition regarding CCTV on Gill Street

Lucilia Branco, Denise Otto and Shabul Zaman addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities responded to the matters raised in the petition. He stated that the Council was committed to its investment plan to upgrade and replace all old cameras with a new high tech cameras. Whist deployable CCTV had recently been deployed in Gill Street. There were good reasons why CCTV installation there was not ideal and an alternative method of addressing ASB in that location would be explored.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Communities for a written response within 28 days.

5.2 Petition regarding Barleymow Estate

Derrick Cutler and Aftab Uddin addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding responded to the matters raised in the petition. He acknowledged the difficulties faced by residents and the inadequate response of the previous administration. He explained that the delays related to a number of factors, but work should be completed by February 2024. The Council would be monitoring the situation to ensure this.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

5.3 Petition regarding Antisocial Behaviour in and around Cambridge Heath Station

Ana Monzon, Anna Bosley and Chris Aria Tree addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities responded to the matters raised in the petition. He stated that the current situation was a result of a lack of police presence in the street and a lack of investment from the previous administration. The petition had been raised with the local police. The Council under his administration had committed to significant investment in drug treatment, rehabilitation and recovery programs, and would work with police and partner organisations to tackle drug related crimes.

RESOLVED:

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Communities for a written response within 28 days.

5.4 Petition regarding Save our Safer Streets

Simon Ramsay, Jane Harris and Shaheena Parvin, addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Emergency responded to the matters raised in the petition. He stated that the Council was putting a robust consultation process in place to listen to all views on this matter and forge a solution that would unify the community and not pit one group against another. He urged Members to support his motion in response to the petition.

Following presentation of the petition Members held a debate on the issue. Two motions were tabled for consideration.

The First motion was Proposed by Councillor Asma Islam and seconded by Councillor Sirajul Islam

This Council notes that:

- Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of motor vehicle traffic in the country so there is a need to reduce vehicle use, as the Mayor said in his 28 September 2022 announcement. This is largely due to vehicles travelling through the borough, because Tower Hamlets has the lowest levels of car ownership in London with approximately only one third of households having access to a car. With the average lung capacity of a child in Tower Hamlets five per cent less than the national average, the Council's aim to tackle low air quality in the borough is important. With transport making up a significant portion of the borough's pollution, the trend towards an increase in vehicle miles in Tower Hamlets must be reversed.
- The implementation of the Liveable Streets was started by the previous Labour administration to reduce traffic and pollution in residential areas in Tower Hamlets, to create safer and more people-friendly and connected neighbourhoods. The target outcome was for all of our residents to enjoy a better environment with cleaner air and less noise and to find it easier and safer to walk and cycle locally.
- While the Liveable Streets schemes that were adopted were targeted at some of the more deprived residential areas in the borough, where there was the most need for capital improvements and had been developed following a thorough consultation with local residents, all areas across the borough should not have been treated the same and should have been directed by community support.
- School Streets, which was developed alongside the Liveable Streets programme, had the

aim of identifying improvements such as removing areas where idling cars congregate and reducing traffic levels near schools significantly, making local children both healthier and safer. This policy was a big success and led to a 30% reduction in pollution near schools.

This Council further notes that:

- 3,094 local people signed the “Save Our Safer Streets in Tower Hamlets” petition, which is the second-highest number of people to complete a petition on the council’s website ever, and the most with regard to any road scheme. There is clearly a significant number of local people who feel strongly that the Liveable Streets schemes are working enough that they are campaigning extensively for their retention.
- A climate emergency has been declared by the council in 2019. The Mayor has an ambition for Tower Hamlets to be the greenest borough in London, including being a “net zero borough as soon as possible”. Actions to support a transition away from private car use and towards sustainable travel options including public transport, walking and cycling have to be part of that process.
- Transport for London has written to the Mayor of Tower Hamlets expressing concern about the complete closure of Liveable Streets, which could be detrimental to the local environment.
- Healthcare professionals, including the Leaders of Bart’s NHS Trust, have also written to the Mayor in response to his proposals, to express their concerns about the lack of evidence for his proposals, set against the established public health evidence that schemes which promote walking and cycling are “necessary measures in our response to both climate change and health inequalities.”
- Schools across the borough have also opposed the Mayor’s complete opening of the roads amid concerns that it will increase air pollution in the area.

This Council resolves:

- To remove Liveable Streets from the October cabinet agenda, to allow the council and the Mayor sufficient time to explore each scheme against consultation results, evidence and consultation views, including local health services and TfL.
- To ask the Mayor to seriously take into consideration the use of ANPR cameras to enable selective closure, allowing vulnerable residents and emergency service access, while discouraging through-traffic..
- To publish the results from the public consultations which finished on 7 August 2022 for transparency, as there has already been more than enough time to analyse the results fully. And to publish any evidence to support the council’s claims about the impacts of the Liveable Streets schemes to date.

- To create a working task force for each of the Liveable Streets schemes, with residents, ward councillors, local businesses, key stakeholders and officers, in order to find out what is working in the scheme and to develop bespoke solutions to issues in each area, where these are needed. The list of areas should include areas where implementations have already been removed and where the original plans were never implemented fully.
- To engage in a meaningful dialogue with TfL and GLA to discuss wider issues such as traffic calming, public transport and pedestrian and cyclist safety, which will support the council's 2019 Transport Strategy commitment to achieve 90% of journeys in the borough to be made by walking, cycling and public transport by 2041.
- To ask the Mayor to consider carefully the financial implications attached to removing the Liveable Streets schemes and what other urgent priorities could be funded instead.
- To implement any changes to Liveable Streets schemes on a case-by-case basis and ensure each scheme is guided by each area's diverse communities and stakeholders, along with thorough research and engagement mentioned above.

The second motion was proposed by Cllr Kabir Ahmed and seconded by Abu Choudhury:

Council notes:

- That In May, the people of Tower Hamlets demonstrated their desire for change, by voting overwhelmingly for Lutfur Rahman as Mayor and the Aspire Party as the largest Party on the Council.
- That the people of Tower Hamlets put their trust in a transformative Manifesto that offered real hope and a real vision for how we could rebuild our Borough.
- That this Manifesto listened to the people of Tower Hamlets, and put their needs and wishes first.
 - That one of the central pledges of this Manifesto was to get Tower Hamlets moving by removing the road closures implemented across the Borough by the previous administration.
 - That these closures have impacted thousands of working people in Tower Hamlets – from delivery drivers, to taxis and small businesses, carers – registered or otherwise – and people with commitments across the Borough, during a cost of living crisis.
 - That the Mayor is committed to ensuring that Tower Hamlets becomes a net-zero Borough as soon as possible, and has already initiated work on delivering the central pledges of his and his Administration's climate and energy offer.

Council believes:

- That it is right to consult residents and stakeholders – including the emergency services and businesses – on any decision to remove these road closures.
- That such a public opinion survey has recently come to a conclusion, receiving thousands of responses from across the Borough.
- That any decision to remove or retain these closures, before considering the results of these public opinion surveys, would pre-empt the right of such residents and stakeholders to have their voices fairly heard.
- That need to understand why people use their cars, what the barriers to public transport are for some, and how we can support them to move away from car usage.
- That this Mayor wants to represent all residents of this Borough and engage with them on this issue in an inclusive way.

Council resolves:

- To wait for all evidence gathered during these public opinion surveys to be analysed and considered with due diligence and process before any decision on the removal of these closures takes place.

Following debate the Motion **moved** by Councillor Asma Islam was put to a vote and was **defeated**.

The Motion **moved** Councillor Kabir Ahmed was put to a vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED:**Council notes:**

- That In May, the people of Tower Hamlets demonstrated their desire for change, by voting overwhelmingly for Lutfur Rahman as Mayor and the Aspire Party as the largest Party on the Council.
- That the people of Tower Hamlets put their trust in a transformative Manifesto that offered real hope and a real vision for how we could rebuild our Borough.
- That this Manifesto listened to the people of Tower Hamlets, and put their needs and wishes first.
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- That this Mayor wants to represent all residents of this Borough and engage with them on this issue in an inclusive way.

Council resolves:

- To wait for all evidence gathered during these public opinion surveys to be analysed and considered with due diligence and process before any decision on the removal of these closures takes place.

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Lutfur Rahman presented his verbal report to Council.

The Opposition Group Leader, Councillor Sirajul Islam then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Mayor Rahman provided concluding remarks.

TRIBUTE TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II

In tribute to the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, the Speaker invited political group representatives to offer thoughts and reflections on her reign. Councillors offered reflections on her dedication, her extraordinary length of service and shared personal memories of times they had the privilege to meet Her Late Majesty, reflecting on her warmth and grace. Each also offered best wishes to King Charles III for his reign.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

Under Procedure Rule 12.1 (g), Councillor Kabir Ahmed gave notice that he was withdrawing his original motion for debate.

Under Procedure Rule 12.1 (n) he requested that Procedure Rule 11.2 be waived to allow the submission of an urgent motion to take its place. This request was seconded by Councillor Harun Miah. The Speaker accepted the reasons for urgency and put the proposal to the vote and it was **agreed**.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Abu Choudhury **seconded** the urgent motion as printed in the tabled papers supplement.

This Council notes:

- The worrying developments in the UK's economy and its impact on the housing market, and the threat this poses to freeholders, leaseholders and private and social renters alike.
- That several independent think-tanks and commentators have pointed to the potential 'tipping point' for those looking to both buy and sell on the property ladder, with others speculating that the market could be heading for 'disaster'.
- That this is having a knock on effect for businesses – many of them Small and Medium Enterprises – who rely on a healthy and equitable market, including construction and utilities firms.
- That should the current downward and precarious trajectory of the market continue, a 'perfect storm' of a surge in borrowing costs and a concurrent slowdown in economic growth could trigger a complete market collapse, plunging millions into economic precarity during a heightening cost of living crisis.

This Council believes:

- That all levels of government – from national to local – should do everything in their power to proactively tackle this slump through innovation, investment and support for residents of all stripes.

- That now, more than ever, there needs to be an increase in the building of social housing to alleviate the pressures on the private rented sector, freehold and leasehold markets.
- That local authorities, where possible, should aim to maximise their social housebuilding programme, and protect as many as possible from the threats currently being witnessed.
- That in times of crisis, fiscal and developmental bravery, boldness and courage is required to ensure that residents are not sucked into the 'perfect storm' threatening the UK's Housing Market.

This Council resolves:

- To continue to proactively seek opportunities to maximise social and affordable house building, to help ease the pressures of the housing market on those with low and medium incomes.
- To begin this process by producing and implementing a developmental *Masterplan* for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area, wherein the maximisation of social and affordable housing will be a priority.
- To follow this model to ensure that local communities around Tower Hamlets are included in these developments, and are able to remain in their areas, regardless of any external pressures resultant from housing crises, prospective or realised.
- That Officers should begin the development of a *Masterplan* for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area in cooperation and conjunction with the Council's Executive.
- That an update on the progress of this development should be given at the next meeting of the Council's Cabinet.

Councillor Asma Islam **moved** and Councillor Marc Francis **seconded** a proposed amendment to the urgent motion as printed in the tabled papers supplement.

Additions underlined

Deletions struck through

This Council notes:

- The worrying developments in the UK's economy and its impact on the housing market, and the threat this poses to freeholders, leaseholders and private and social renters alike.

- That several independent think-tanks and commentators have pointed to the potential ‘tipping point’ for those looking to both buy and sell on the property ladder, with others speculating that the market could be heading for ‘disaster’.
- That this is having a knock on effect for businesses – many of them Small and Medium Enterprises – who rely on a healthy and equitable market, including construction and utilities firms.
- That should the current downward and precarious trajectory of the market continue, a ‘perfect storm’ of a surge in borrowing costs and a concurrent slowdown in economic growth could trigger a complete market collapse, plunging millions into economic precarity during a heightening cost of living crisis.

This Council further notes:

- The previous Labour administration’s work in building Council homes, which saw over 1,000 additional homes delivered during that time. However, more needs to be done to combat Government inaction.

This Council believes:

- That all levels of government – from national to local – should do everything in their power to proactively tackle this slump through innovation, investment and support for residents of all stripes.
- That local authorities across the UK urgently needs a Labour Government in power to prioritise and support the rebuilding of our social housing stock and bring homes back into the ownership of local councils and communities, with home ownership opened up to millions more.
- That the current social housing stock needs to be reviewed and improvements considered alongside a program of housebuilding to ensure that the right to live in a home fit for human habitation is non-negotiable.
- That now, more than ever, there needs to be an increase in the building of social housing to alleviate the pressures on the private rented sector, freehold and leasehold markets.
- That local authorities, where possible, should aim to maximise their social housebuilding programme, and protect as many as possible from the threats currently being witnessed.
- That in these times of crisis, fiscal and developmental bravery economic turmoil, boldness and courage is required to ensure that residents are protected from the threats to are not sucked into the ‘perfect storm’ threatening the UK’s Housing Market.

This Council resolves:

- To continue to proactively seek opportunities to maximise social and affordable house building, to help ease the pressures of the housing market on those with low and medium incomes.
- To urgently look at the current social housing stock in the borough and immediately improve the quality of the housing, including providing better insulation to address fuel poverty in these difficult times.
- To do a review of the Spitalfields and Banglatown area in conjunction with the local communities and local businesses regarding its current state and to assess the negative impacts that could come from private developments related to anti-social behaviour, waste collection and the night economy.
- To begin this process by producing and implementing a developmental *Masterplan* for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area, wherein the maximisation of social and affordable housing will be a priority.
- To follow this model to ensure that local communities around Tower Hamlets are included in these developments, and are able to remain in their areas, regardless of any external pressures resultant from housing crises, prospective or realised.
- That Officers should begin the development of a *Masterplan* for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area in cooperation and conjunction with the Council's Executive.
- That an update on the progress of this development should be given at the next meeting of the Council's Cabinet.
- To set up a cross-party working group to look at developing Masterplans to all areas of Tower Hamlets, working with communities, businesses and the local Councillors.

Following debate, the amendment **moved** by Councillor Asma Islam was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

The motion as **moved** by Councillor Kabir Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED:**This Council notes:**

- The worrying developments in the UK's economy and its impact on the housing market, and the threat this poses to freeholders, leaseholders and private and social renters alike.

- That several independent think-tanks and commentators have pointed to the potential ‘tipping point’ for those looking to both buy and sell on the property ladder, with others speculating that the market could be heading for ‘disaster’.
- That this is having a knock on effect for businesses – many of them Small and Medium Enterprises – who rely on a healthy and equitable market, including construction and utilities firms.
- That should the current downward and precarious trajectory of the market continue, a ‘perfect storm’ of a surge in borrowing costs and a concurrent slowdown in economic growth could trigger a complete market collapse, plunging millions into economic precarity during a heightening cost of living crisis.

This Council believes:

- That all levels of government – from national to local – should do everything in their power to proactively tackle this slump through innovation, investment and support for residents of all stripes.
- That now, more than ever, there needs to be an increase in the building of social housing to alleviate the pressures on the private rented sector, freehold and leasehold markets.
- That local authorities, where possible, should aim to maximise their social housebuilding programme, and protect as many as possible from the threats currently being witnessed.
- That in times of crisis, fiscal and developmental bravery, boldness and courage is required to ensure that residents are not sucked into the ‘perfect storm’ threatening the UK’s Housing Market.

This Council resolves:

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- To begin this process by producing and implementing a developmental *Masterplan* for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area, wherein the maximisation of social and affordable housing will be a priority.
- To follow this model to ensure that local communities around Tower Hamlets are included in these developments, and are able to remain in their areas, regardless of any external pressures resultant from housing crises, prospective or realised.

- That Officers should begin the development of a *Masterplan* for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area in cooperation and conjunction with the Council's Executive.
- That an update on the progress of this development should be given at the next meeting of the Council's Cabinet.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved** and Councillor Sabina Akhtar **seconded** the motion as set out on the agenda.

Councillor Abu Choudhury **moved** and Councillor Bodrul Choudhury **seconded** a proposed amendment to the motion as set out in the tabled papers supplement:

Additions underlined
Deletions struckthrough

This Council notes:

- The devastating impact the huge energy bills increase has had on small businesses across the borough, where many are now concerned that they will have to close due to the unreasonable cost.
- Small businesses are only recently recovering from the long term effects of the lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The loss of small businesses across our borough will have a very negative affect on the local economy and residents who are already struggling in the face of the Cost of Living Crisis.

This Council believes:

- It is vital that innovative measures are immediately adopted – both at a Government level and at a Local Authority level - to support local businesses in the face of the Cost of Living Crisis, so local businesses, local jobs and local high streets are protected to benefit local residents.
- That schemes such as the Mayor's Energy Fund and Cost of Living package, that will benefit 7,000 households for the former and 27,000 residents for the latter, should be supported by all members of this Council and topped up as and when required.

This Council resolves to:

- Request the Mayor
 - o To explore Immediately set up a Small Business Hardship Fund to help small businesses in the borough in these times of economic crisis a Business Rates rebate for small businesses with Central Government to help offset the huge increase in cost of energy bills.
 - o ~~Provide Business Rates relief to small businesses to help offset the huge increase in the cost of energy bills.~~

- To continue providing support for small and medium enterprises, including the recently announced £28million dividend for Tower Hamlets' SMEs in the Mayor's Covid Additional Relief Fund, benefiting 850 businesses across the Borough.
- Work with the local Chambers of Commerce, community groups and business networks to establish a plan going forward on how to protect local businesses.

Following debate, the amendment **moved** by Councillor Abu Choudhury was put to a vote and was **agreed**.

The motion as amended by Councillor Abu Choudhury was put to a vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- The devastating impact the huge energy bills increase has had on small businesses across the borough, where many are now concerned that they will have to close due to the unreasonable cost.
- Small businesses are only recently recovering from the long term effects of the lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
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- That schemes such as the Mayor's Energy Fund and Cost of Living package, that will benefit 7,000 households for the former and 27,000 residents for the latter, should be supported by all members of this Council and topped up as and when required.

This Council resolves to:

- Request the Mayor
 - To explore a Business Rates rebate for small businesses with Central Government to help offset the huge increase in cost of energy bills.
 - To continue providing support for small and medium enterprises, including the recently announced £28million dividend for Tower Hamlets' SMEs in the Mayor's Covid Additional Relief Fund, benefiting 850 businesses across the Borough.
 - Work with the local Chambers of Commerce, community groups and business networks to establish a plan going forward on how to protect local businesses.

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

Nil items.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Spitalfields Neighbourhood Plan – Post-Referendum Adoption

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Harun Miah **seconded** a motion not to adopt the neighbourhood plan as part of the development plan for the area as:

- There was a high turnout amongst the business community and most respondents voted against the plan. The resident turnout, narrowly in favour, was far lower.
- The Mayor and the. Aspire group had ambitions and a transformative vision for Spitalfields and Banglatown. This would recognise the historic and cultural significance of the area and would preserve and enrich these aspects. It would guard against gentrification and commercialisation, which presented an existential threat to many in Tower Hamlets.

During discussion, the Council heard views from members in support of the motion which included:

- The proposed plan was exclusionary. The Plan's designers had little regard for the cultural diversity of the area.
- The plan would interfere with the normal Council processes for planning applications, which ensured all stakeholders in the affected area are consulted.

The Council heard views against the motion which included:

- The result of the business vote should not be relied on as there were concerns regarding the legality of the business vote which were subject to investigation.
- The Council should not go against the will of residents, as evidenced by the result of the residents' vote, which was in favour of the plan.

Councillor Maium Talukdar **moved** a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 16.5. the names for and against the motion or abstaining from voting be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes. The motion was **agreed**.

The Mayor and Councillors recorded their votes on the motion as follows:-

RESOLVED

1. To note the results of the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Plan referendums.

2. To agree not to adopt the neighbourhood plan as part of the development plan for the area.
3. To agree to set out the reasons for the above Recommendation 2 in a decision statement.

Vote to decide not to adopt the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Plan (Report)	
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	For
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	For
Councillor Leelu Ahmed	For
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	For
Councillor Saied Ahmed	For
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	For
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	For
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	For
Councillor Amina Ali	For
Councillor Asma Begum	For
Councillor Maisha Begum	For
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	Against
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	For
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	For
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	For
Councillor Jahed Choudhury	For
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	For
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury	For
Councillor Marc Francis	For
Councillor Peter Golds	Against
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	For
Councillor Kabir Hussain	For
Councillor Kamrul Hussain	For
Councillor Shubo Hussain	For
Councillor Asma Islam	For
Councillor Sirajul Islam	For
Councillor Ahmodul Kabir	For
Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled	For
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	For
Councillor Sabina Khan	For
Councillor Amy Lee	For
Councillor Abdul Malik	For
Councillor Abdul Mannan	For
Councillor Ana Miah	For
Councillor Ayas Miah	For
Councillor Harun Miah	For
Councillor Amin Rahman	For
Mayor Lutfur Rahman	For
Councillor Rebaka Sultana	For
Councillor Maium Talukdar	For
Councillor Bellal Uddin	For

Councillor Abdal Ullah	For
Councillor Abdul Wahid	For
Carried	

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The following question and supplementary question was put and responded to by the relevant Cabinet Member.

11.1 Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury on the progress of an Independent Council-wide Investigation.

Following on from last Full Council, could the Lead Member update the chamber on progress with the independent Council-wide investigation? Can the Lead Member tell us who has been appointed and set out a timeline for delivery?

Response from Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

The Mayor was briefed by 16th of August as requested to outline delivery and provide assurance about improvement work. We are rapidly progressing reviews in the areas highlighted in the area of finance the council has commissioned worth technical accounting solutions to examine progress since the errors arose in 2018/2019 and highlight any gaps. Errors that arose in the supervision of the previous administration on the other side of this chamber. This administration take this very seriously. And a report is due to be shared with the officers in early October and will then be shared with Members. This follows the 2019 review when a finance improvement plan was implemented. On the youth justice service, a full diagnostic review has been commissioned to be carried out by two Youth Justice board approved and experienced improvement consultants to be completed February 2023.

Supplementary question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Why were the accounts not audited for 6 years?

Councillor Saied Ahmed's response to supplementary question

This Council has a comprehensive Improvement Program, which provides assurance through our performance management framework, audit and external inspection regime. This includes corporate and public reporting, including audit committee, and Overview and Scrutiny and a commitment to an LGA corporate peer review next year to continue to drive improvement across all our services. It is important that audit papers are signed off. Now we are picking up the mess that we were left behind by the previous administration. We are working extensively hard with KPMG and Deloitte to make sure the accounts are signed off from 2017 onwards. So we are at a stage whereby the upcoming Audit Committee, we may be in a position to sign off the first two years.

Questions 11.2 to 11.27 were not put due to lack of time (Note: The written responses are included in Appendix 'A' to these minutes.)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No motions were considered due to lack of time.

The meeting ended at 10.03 p.m.

Speaker of the Council