

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE CABINET****HELD AT 5.35 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 29 MARCH 2023****COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL****Members Present in Person:**

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	
Councillor Maium Talukdar	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor))
Councillor Saied Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living)
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	(Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	(Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth)
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	(Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation)

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Kabir Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding)
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Other Councillors Present in Person:

Councillor Nathalie Bienfait

Officers Present in Person:

Stephen Halsey	(Interim Chief Executive)
Jennifer Peters	(Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place)
Agnes Adrien	(Head of Litigation, Legal Services)
Stephen Bramah	(Corporate Head of Strategy and Improvement)
Ann Corbett	(Director, Community Safety)
Sharon Godman	(Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Joseph Leach	(Business Intelligence and Performance Lead)
Steve Nyakatawa	(Director of Education)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)
Sarah Wilks	(Infrastructure Planning Team Leader, Place)
Nigel Davis	(Head of Highways & Transportation)
Abdul Wajid	(Project Officer, Place)
Joel West	(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Caroline Holland
Nisar Visram

(Interim Corporate Director, Resources)
(Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from:

- Councillor Kabir Hussain, (Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency).
- Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director Place (Jennifer Peters, Director Planning and Building Control was deputising).
- Janet Fasan, Director Legal and Monitoring Officer (Agnes Adrien, Head of Litigation was deputising as acting Monitoring Officer).

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting on 22 February 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

There were no announcements from the Mayor.

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

The Cabinet received and noted the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-decision question on Item 6.2.

Councillor Musthak Ahmed, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided an overview of recent scrutiny activity. The Committee had considered the Strategic Performance Report for quarter 3 and was pleased to see performance for measures which are meeting or exceeding the target have remained consistent and was encouraged by new initiatives delivered to meet the ambitions set out in the strategic plan. The Committee expressed concern that the total number of measures with a red status has risen from four in quarter two to eight in quarter three and had enquired into the plans to address underperformance.

The Committee had considered the Budget Monitoring report for quarter 3 and had asked discussed the drivers for £48m drawdown from reserves in

2022/23; work underway to identify savings for future years and the timelines in which these will be achieved; and council tax recovery.

The Committee had also focused on the council's response to the climate emergency. An update on the recommendations OSC made last year to improve air quality in the borough was reviewed. The Committee asked how the council is working with staff to support net zero ambitions and ensure they are more aware and better informed in both their professional and personal life. The Committee also noted the importance of communicating our plans to residents and ensure this is inclusive of all communities in the borough. The Committee noted that the Council has a new air quality action plan for the next 5 years which has been signed off by the GLA and supersedes the previous plan reviewed by OSC. It had noted that delivery of the new action plan required significant resource and how GLA funding for this may be compromised if there is a decision to remove LTNs.

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

None.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 Quarter 3 including Capital

Councillor Saied Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living) introduced the report that presented the forecast outturn compared to the budget report 2022/23 as at 31st December 2022 (Period 9) for the General Fund, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), progress made against savings targets and the council's capital programme as well as projections on General Fund earmarked reserves and the forecast impacts of Covid on the Council's finances in 2022-23.

The Mayor welcomed the report and agreed the recommendations.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the council's forecast outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget, Housing Revenue Account and earmarked reserves for 2022-23, based on forecasts as at 31st December 2022;
2. Notes the progress made against the 2022-23 savings targets, based on forecasts as at 31st December 2022;
3. Notes the council's forecast outturn position against General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programme approved budgets for 2022-23, based on forecasts as at 31st December 2022;

4. Notes that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

6.2 Strategic Delivery and Performance Reporting Q3 –2022/23

The pre-decision scrutiny question and response was noted.

Councillor Saied Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living) introduced the report that provided an overview of the performance measures monitored in Quarter Three (Q3) of the council's Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23.

Stephen Bramah, (Head of Corporate Strategy & Improvement) provided further detail, including how the report had been amended to include commentary such as details of mitigation measures and timescales to rectify red measures.

Cabinet members noted the proposals and welcomed in particular: Work to improve positive skills and employment. Extra funding for disabilities and extra needs should deliver improved outcomes.

Concern was expressed by the Mayor and Cabinet members at the apparent increase in 'red' status indicators since quarter 2. The Mayor stressed it was important that improvement is demonstrated and expressed hope all red indicators would move to amber in the near future. He also explained how previously agreed additional investment in services would assist in this.

Stephen Halsey, Interim Chief Executive, explained how he had been set objectives by the Mayor to address underperformance and secure returns on additional investment. He assured the Mayor and Cabinet he, the Corporate Leadership Team and all officers were working toward those objectives.

The recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the summary status as set out at the beginning of the appendix monitoring report.
2. Notes the status of performance measures in Q3 in the appendix to the report.

6.3 Report on the outcome of public representations received in response to the statutory Notice on the proposal for the amalgamation (merger) of The Bishop Challoner RC Federation Girls' and Boys' Schools

Councillor Maium Talukdar (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning) introduced the report that informed of the outcome of the four week period of public representation in response to the statutory notice on the proposal for the amalgamation (merger) of Bishop Challoner Catholic Girls' and Boys' Schools to create a Bishop Challoner Co-

educational Catholic School for 11-18 year olds. He explained that the consultation was robust and thorough, and that the schools' new leadership were looking forward to improving outcomes.

Steve Nyakatawa, (Director of Education) provided further context and detail. Steve explained how the amalgamation presented an opportunity to make improvements to the schools as well as securing financial benefits and allowing for a coherent and consistent approach to education for all pupils.

The Mayor welcomed the proposals. He indicated he was looking forward to seeing the improvement. He agreed the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet

1. Considers the report and its supporting documents, particularly the statutory notice (Appendix 1 to the report) and the Equality Assessment (Appendix 2 to the report), along with comments made by respondents to the Statutory Notice.
2. Agrees to the amalgamation (merger) of Bishop Challoner Catholic Girls' and Boys' Schools to create a Bishop Challoner Co-educational Catholic School for 11–18-year-olds from 1st September 2023.

6.4 Award of Highways and Street Lighting Contract

Wajid Majid (Group Manager Design & Delivery) introduced the report that sought approval for the award of the Highways & Street Lighting Works Term Service Contract following a re-procurement exercise. Wajid provided details about the procurement process and the "call-off" nature of the contract.

Wajid and Nigel Davies (Head of Highways & Transportation) explained the rationale for the new duration for the contract.

The mayor welcomed the report and in particular the rigorous process to assess and award the contract. He agreed the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet.

1. Approves the contract award for the Highways and Street Lighting Term Service Contract, as outlined in the report, to the highest scoring contractor emboldened under the section "Final Score" detailed in Appendix 1 to the report for an initial period of 60 months from 1.7.2023, with a right for the Council, in its absolute discretion, to extend the contract for a period of up to a further 24 months in accordance with the advertised opportunity.
2. Notes that that any exercise of the contractual option to extend will only be undertaken by the relevant Chief Officer following consultation with the Mayor.

6.5 London City Airport: Neighbouring Authority Agreement

Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding) introduced the report that proposed the Council enter into a Neighbouring Authority Agreement with the airport to enable them to oversee and if required enforce planning obligations within the S106 Legal Agreement where it relates to properties within those boroughs. Councillor Ahmed explained that without entering into the agreement, the Council, would not have the legal means to oversee and if necessary, enforce the planning obligations relating to properties within Tower Hamlets and as such these properties may be at risk of not receiving the noise insulation that they are entitled to.

Sarah Wilks (Infrastructure Planning Manager) provided further detail, explaining that the final agreement from London City Airport had now been received. Further to questions from Cabinet members, Sarah explained that under the agreement it was the obligation of the airport to publicise support available to eligible residents.

The Cabinet discussed the apparent low response rate in the consultation compared to neighbouring boroughs and potential reasons for it.

The Mayor welcomed the report which he hoped would provide additional protection for residents. He agreed the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet

1. Approves the entering into a Neighbouring Authority Agreement with London City Airport.

6.6 Voluntary and Community Sector – Grants Policy & Outcomes Framework

The Mayor agreed the reasons for urgency as provided in the report and noted the written submissions provided by Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets and Tower Hamlets CVS. He indicated he would provide a written response to the submissions and any questions from the organisations.

Councillor Saied Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living) introduced the report that set out a new VCS grants policy and outcome framework and proposed a new grants programme providing long-term funding to enable the achievement of the vision to ‘support and invest in a thriving and diverse VCS to enable it to improve outcomes for Tower Hamlets residents’. Councillor Ahmed outlined the different funding available for the different programme themes and provided an indicative timetable for the launch, assessment and award of grants.

Councillor Ahmed proposed a minor amendment to the report and recommendations. He proposed adjusting the proposed organisational assessment for applicants to ensure smaller organisations and those new to the sector could also benefit from funding, as follows:

- amending the second bullet point to of paragraph 3.7(d) to 'Track record of successful service delivery, or for new organisations, clear ability to demonstrate capacity and skills to deliver services successfully'.

The Mayor explained the importance the VCS sector of Tower Hamlets. The sector is vital to the social and economic vitality of the borough. He expressed disappointment that the sector appeared to have contracted recently, with only a small number of groups benefitting from Council funding in recent years. Accordingly, he had dedicated additional funding to ensure long-term capacity of the sector. He explained the key elements of the proposed new grants programme; the key priorities that drove it and how these were informed by a thorough consultation exercise; and summarised the proposed governance arrangements. Mayoral powers were proposed to be delegated to the Chief Executive for the determination of awards under the Mayor's Community Grant programme, whilst small grants would continue to be determined by the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub Committee.

The Mayor welcomed and agreed Councillor Saied Ahmed's proposed amendment, which he hoped would ensure all VCS organisations can fairly bid for Council funding. He agreed the recommendations with the amendment.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the consultation and engagement undertaken to develop the policy and outcomes framework as set out in para 3.3 and Appendix 2 to the report.
2. Agrees the Grants Policy and Outcome Framework as set in paras 3.4-3.5 and Appendix 3 to the report.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive to finalise the detailed prospectus of each grants programme.
4. Notes the proposed timetable for new grants arrangements as outlined in para 3.6 of the report and agree the three and a half-year programme for the Mayor's Community Grants, from October 2023 to March 2027.
5. Agrees the grant assessment arrangements as set out in para 3.7 of the report, subject to amending the second bullet point to of paragraph 3.7(d) to 'Track record of successful service delivery, or for new organisations, clear ability to demonstrate capacity and skills to deliver services successfully'.
6. Agrees the budget for the grants programme as set out in para 3.8 of the report.
7. Agrees that the proposed governance process for the development and implementation of the grants programme for the VCS as set out in

paragraph 3.9 of the report and note a further update will be provided to Cabinet April 2023.

8. Authorises the Chief Executive to agree the final grant awards for the Mayor's Community Grants Programme.
9. Authorises the Chief Executive to agree an extension of 4 weeks of existing grants programme, if necessary, as set out in para 3.6 (a) of the report.
10. Notes the result of the equalities impact screening as set out in para 4.1 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 6.25 p.m.

Mayor Lutfur Rahman