

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 15 th November 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motion for debate submitted by the Administration	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one specific Motion submitted by the Administration. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. The Administration Motion is submitted by the Aspire Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

ADMINISTRATION MOTION FOR DEBATE – MOTION ON THE LOCAL PLAN

Motion Proposed by: Cllr Kabir Ahmed

Seconded by: Cllr Abu Talha Chowdhury

This Council notes:

- That overcrowding in the borough had been left unchecked from the years 2015 to 2022, with over 14,000 residents now classified as living in acutely overcrowded conditions.
- That the development of new, affordable homes for rent has not kept pace with the rapid population growth and concomitant rise in said overcrowding, with some years during the period 2015-2022 seeing as little as 140 homes completed in a single year^[1].
- That the development of affordable housing has always played a central role of critical importance to Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his team, who delivered thousands of affordable, social homes for rent during his previous administrations.
- That this commitment has continued into this current administration's first term, with at least 4,000 affordable homes for rent pledged to be delivered, and over 1,000 already built or in the pipeline.
- That the Council's current Local Plan is due for a refresh, with the first version of this refreshed Plan – regulation 18 – passing through Cabinet on 25th October 2023.

This Council believes:

- That the delivery of affordable rented homes has slowed over the past seven years.
 - That restrictive policies have prevented a greater number of affordable homes from being built, due to a limitation on height, density and the percentage of affordable units that must be delivered per development, alongside the tenure mix between affordable rented homes and intermediate properties.
 - That the previous local plan was not ambitious enough to meet the growing demand for affordable and sustainable housing in Tower Hamlets.
 - That the current proposed refresh will revolutionise and expedite the way that affordable housing is delivered in the years to come, tackling the overcrowding crisis at a much greater pace and providing decent, affordable homes to the residents of Tower Hamlets.
 - That this is demonstrated in the proposed commitment to raising the affordable housing criteria expected of developers from the existing 35% threshold to a more ambitious 40%; a redressing of the 70:30 affordable/ intermediate split of this 40% to a revised 85:15 ratio – guaranteeing more *genuinely* affordable homes for residents; and through the prioritisation of the development of 3 and 4 bedroom properties to accommodate the growing family-sized population of the borough.
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- That this refreshed Local Plan will see height and density prioritised to help maximise the delivery of affordable housing, with the whole borough becoming a Tall Building Zone (TBZ) where this does not impact on cultural or heritage conservation areas. This will include a pushing of the maximum building height threshold to 23 storeys.
- That this refreshed Local Plan will be a catalyst for further social and economic development for all residents, as well as protecting and enhancing the borough's local environment and green spaces.
- That this refreshed Local Plan will respect, enhance and incorporate heritage and conservation areas into all new developments.
- That this refreshed Local Plan should be made accessible to all residents in the borough – regardless of language, race or background – to ensure that a fair and holistic engagement process is ensured, and all resident voices are heard.

This Council resolves:

- To support and promote engagement with the Regulation 18 version of the refreshed local plan for all residents.
- To work with the BME media to help promote this engagement.
- To commend the Lead Member and Officers for their hard work in capturing the ambition of this administration regarding housebuilding within the document.
- To request regular updates on the journey of the refreshed Local Plan through the relevant stages of its progression.