

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MINUTES OF THE CABINET****HELD AT 5.42 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 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 Kabir Ahmed	(Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding)
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 Safer Communities)
Councillor Iqbal Hossain	(Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation)
Councillor Kabir Hussain	(Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency)
Councillor Abdul Wahid	(Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth)

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Councillor Musthak Ahmed	
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Adults and Health Services

Officers Present in Person:

Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health and Social Care)
Janet Fasan	(Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)
Sam Harney	(Mayor's Political Advisor)
Nicola Klinger	(Housing Companies Manager)
Filuck Miah	(Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation Service)
Raj Mistry	Corporate Director for Communities
Katie O'Driscoll	(Director of Adult Social Care)
Jennifer Peters	(Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place)
Marissa Ryan-Hernandez	(Plan Making Team Leader)
Karen Swift	(Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children's Services)
David Tolley	(Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards)
Joel West	(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

Matthew Wong

Planning Officer

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

John Harrison

Interim Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit

Jignesh Parmar

(Head of Procurement)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

In relation to Item 6.10, Councillors Abu Chowdhury, Maium Talukdar and Abdul Wahid declared they were current members of the Tower Hamlets Homes Board, having been nominated by the Mayor.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED:

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 20 September 2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

At the request of the Mayor, Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive made the following statement:

Tower Hamlets is a Council and a Borough where there is No Place for Hate.

We are also one of the most diverse and the most densely populated places in the Country.

We are an example of how people from different backgrounds and different religions can live and work together in harmony. Our recent Annual Residents survey showed that 87% of people feel they get on well with one another.

Our hearts and minds are with the people affected by the conflict in the middle east. We hope for a swift and peaceful resolution.

As a Council, services including Community Safety, Communications, Highways and the Mayor's Office, have been working on a daily basis to monitor the situation in our borough and to ensure that appropriate action is taken where necessary whilst at the same time ensuring we are not adding to any community tensions.

This work has included working alongside partners including Tower Hamlets Police, the Tension Monitoring Group, Community Faith Leaders, No Place for Hate Forum and community organisations.

Over the past two weeks, we have seen increased patrols of police and our THEOS on our streets. This work is also based on intelligence from our CCTV control room.

The strength of our community and the mutual respect and understanding demonstrated on a daily basis was underlined last week during national No Place for Hate week. We hosted and took part in events that celebrated diversity with activities including a reception at the Town Hall for our No Place for Hate Champions, a peace walk from Altab Ali Park to Rich Mix and a football tournament for people of all backgrounds in Stepney.

By continuing to be vigilant, responding to intelligence and through partnership working, we will do all we can to ensure the safety of our residents and staff.

The safety of our residents and the local community is of paramount importance and should evidence suggest that that is impacted appropriate steps will be taken, including the removal of flags.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Councillor Musthak Ahmed, Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee addressed the meeting on behalf of the Committee. He provided the Mayor and Cabinet with an overview of the Committee's recent meetings.

On 9 October the Committee considered a call-in on the decision taken by the Chief Executive on 25 September on the Mayors Community Grant Programme (MCGP). The committee deliberated on the evidence presented and subsequently voted on re-affirming the original decision.

On 23 October the Committee considered a call-in on the decision taken by Cabinet on 20th September 2023, on Liveable Streets Bethnal Green Outcomes and Measures. The committee deliberated on the evidence presented and subsequently voted on re-affirming the Cabinet decision.

The Committee also reviewed the Strategic Delivery Performance 2023/24 and Budget Monitoring Q1 and raised performance questions on a number of matters including homes for future priority and additions to the housing stock; drop care leavers in education training and employment; and keeping residents informed about decision making processes.

On budget monitoring, the Committee considered a number of matters including risks and investment needed with the integration of Tower Hamlets; application of funding for members development; deficit repayment, funding for Education Health and Care Plans

The Committee had also received presentations on the Combatting Drugs Partnership Strategy and the new Local Plan.

Finally, Health Scrutiny Lead Councillor Ahmodur Khan spoke briefly on the background and recommendations for the scrutiny review report on workforce shortages across the health and care sector, which Cabinet would be asked to consider at this meeting.

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

None.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 MTFs and Budget Scene Setting 2024-27

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the item that provided an update on the MTFs position since it was approved by Council in March 2023 and an overview of the budget setting process being undertaking to present Council with a proposed budget for 2024/25. Councillor Ahmed explained that the focus was how to maximise benefits of transformation and customer focus at a reduced cost. He briefly outlined some of the strategies being explored to help deliver this including:

- Exploring potential restructure and streamlining options; voluntary and early retirement and other flexible options for staff.
- Utilising the Council's assets to maximise income generation.
- Reviewing third party contracts to identify and deliver best value
- Review of temporary and agency workers.

Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources and John Harrison, Interim Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit added further detail. Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive, explained how the work to deliver a balanced budget was critical to delivering the administration's manifesto promises. He assured the Mayor and Cabinet that the Council was in a relatively strong financial position compared to other authorities that had been in the media in recent years; an assertion that would be validated when the full MTFs report was considered by the Mayor in Cabinet early in 2024.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the current projected MTFs budget position in paragraph 3.2.2.
2. Note the actions set out in section 3.4 that are being taken to address the budget gap.

6.2 Continuation of Business Rates Pooling

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the item that proposed why and how the Council could continue to participate in the business rates pool with seven other neighbouring London Boroughs in 2024/25.

The Mayor welcomed the report and proposals. He indicated he felt the pool would ensure the Council and its partners would be better off financially than by acting individually.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Continues the Council's participation in the 8 Authority Pool for Business Rates with seven other London Local Authorities for 2024-25.

6.3 Record of Corporate Directors Action 23-24 Q1

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the report that set out Corporate Director's Actions taken under Rule 10 (section 50 Record of Corporate Director's Actions (RCDA) - Waiving of Procurement Procedures) in Part C – Codes and Protocols of the Council's constitution. The section stated that Corporate Director's Actions in respect of contracts over £100,000 must be reported to Cabinet for noting.

Jignesh Parmar, Head of Procurement, provided further detail.

Further to questions from the Mayor on the listed RCDA reference P(R)347, officers explained that due to difficulties securing market interest, a 12 month direct award had been agreed for the Catering Cafe Operator which would allow sufficient opportunity for the Council to undertake a review of the market and conduct an open tender.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the Record of Corporate Directors' Actions set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

6.4 Contracts Forward Plan (Quarter 2 2023/2024)

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the report that set out a forward plan of supply and service contracts over £1m in value, or capital works contracts over £5m. Jignesh Parmar, (Head of Procurement) provided further detail.

Further to questions from the Mayor on ref P5343, Parking Management System, Raj Mistry, Corporate Director Communities explained that this was a variation of an existing contract to ensure the Council could manage parking

on Tower Hamlets Homes sites. It was noted that the covering report incorrectly categorised this contract in the housing and Regeneration Directorate, but should be within the Communities Directorate.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the contract summary at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Authorises the appropriate Corporate Director in consultation with the Mayor to award those contracts set out in Appendix 1 to the report, following an appropriate procurement exercise.
3. Authorises the Director Legal Services (Monitoring Officer), to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts, subject to an appropriate award decision being achieved.
4. Notes the procurement forward plan 2023-2028 schedule detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

6.5 Action Plan Response to Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee Review and Recommendations Report on 'Workforce Shortages Across The Health and Care Sector'

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care introduced the report that presented the service action plan response from the Northeast London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) and the Council on the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HASSC) review report regarding 'Workforce Shortages Across The Health and Care Sector' in Northeast London.

At the request of the Mayor, Francesca Okosi, Chief People and Culture Officer, NHS North East London addressed the meeting to explain how the action plan would be supported by her organisation.

Further to questions from Cabinet members, Ms Okosi provided further detail on.

- How the success of the action plan would be measured
- Efforts to promote access into employment for underrepresented communities.
- Quick wins and short-term measures that could be taken to deliver swift improvements.
- Plans to access to external funding; pooling resources, working with stakeholders and learning from good practice.
- Efforts to reach out to BAME patients; establishment of universal basic standards and training so patients from all backgrounds get appropriate care.
- How the service will listen to service users to build on their experiences.
- Communication activities and plans. Non-traditional methods are being explored among efforts to demystify the sector and raise its profile

amongst underrepresented groups.

The Mayor welcomed the report and offered his thanks to Ms Okosi for her presentation and work to address workforce shortages across the sector.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Agrees the council's action plan response on the HASSC scrutiny review report recommendation on 'Workforce Shortages Across the Health and Care Sector.
2. Notes the action plan response on the HASSC scrutiny review report recommendation on 'Workforce Shortages Across the Health and Care Sector provided by the executive and Northeast London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) to the report recommendations.

6.6 Tower Hamlets - Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022-23

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care introduced the report that presented the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report setting out progress, achievements and learning over the previous year. Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community and Katie O'Driscoll, Director of Adult Social Care, provided further detail. Councillor Choudhury, Denise and Katie outlined some of the key achievements of the Board over the past year, including:

- Community safeguarding YouTube video created by the engagement group.
- Strengthening of audit work in adult social care.
- Focus on learning and development of staff across the system.
- Three Tower Hamlets residents now part of the London Safeguarding Voices Network.

Denise noted that, whilst there had been a fall in safeguarding referrals in 2022-23 compared to the year before, this was being treated with vigilance due to awareness of under-reporting in the sector. Awareness raising remained critical to the work to ensure full reporting of cases.

Further to questions from Cabinet members, Denise and Katie explained how different approaches to awareness-raising were being pursued. They also explained that referral processes were kept under review to ensure they are as clear as possible.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022-23.

6.7 Additional Licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation Designation

Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency introduced the report that set out the proposed renewal

designation for an Additional Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme for properties in multiple occupation within the Borough, following on from a public consultation. The report also covered proposed standard conditions imposed on each licensed property, the revised rental property standards to be adopted and the fee structure for a licence. Councillor Hussain expressed hope that, through the scheme, landlords would be providing more safe and high-quality homes for renters in the borough.

David Tolley, (Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards) provided further detail, including how the proposed scheme compared to the scheme currently in place and which properties would be covered by it.

The Mayor and Cabinet welcomed the report and asked that a communications strategy be developed to create awareness of the new scheme and its provisions.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the results of the consultation undertaken in relation to the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme as summarised in the report.
2. Designates all wards in the Borough as subject to Additional Licensing under section 56(1) of the Housing Act 2004 in relation to multiple-occupied properties occupied by three or more persons in two or more households where some or all the facilities are shared. Such designation to take effect from 1st April 2024 and to last for five years unless revoked before then.
3. Agrees the fee structure for the Additional Licensing Scheme as set out in in the report, with the fees being determined during the budget setting process for 24/25. The application fee will be apportioned for administrative and enforcement costs.
4. Agrees the Additional Licensing Scheme licence conditions, fit and proper person protocol and private rental property standards as detailed for adoption at the commencement of the new designation. The revised private rental property standards, revised conditions and fit and proper person protocol will also apply as necessary, to the mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation, current Additional Licensing and Selective Licensing schemes from 1 January 2024.
5. Delegates the Corporate Director Communities authority to issue the required statutory notifications in relation to the commencement of the Additional Licensing Scheme designation.
6. Agrees that there are no exemptions apart for the statutory exemptions.

6.8 Tower Hamlets New Local Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation Draft

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report that proposed a new Local Plan for consultation. Councillor Ahmed explained:

- the demographic and geographic context for the plan, including stressing that the borough is the fastest-growing local authority in the country with the highest housing-building targets.
- how the new Local Plan would assist in realising the economic, environmental, health and social objectives of the Council in building a vibrant and successful future for Tower Hamlets that benefits all residents, regardless of background or circumstances.
- how early engagement with the community had informed the draft.
- how the plan aligned with the Council's strategic plan.
- how the six-week public consultation would allow all stakeholders to have their say and provide feedback.

Councillor Ahmed offered thanks to all officers involved in the development of the draft plan.

Jennifer Peters, (Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place)
Marissa Ryan-Hernandez, (Plan Making Team Leader) and Matthew Wong, Plan Making Manager provided further detail.

The Mayor welcomed the report. He indicated he felt the previous planning policies did not allow the Council to reach its full ambition regarding regeneration, housebuilding and supply. He stressed he wanted the borough to be a regeneration-led authority, something he hoped would help to address wider social and structural concerns faced by residents. The limited opportunities for building meant the Council would consider building out, but also building up, helped in part by changes to tall building policies. Through this new approach, the Mayor explained he wished the borough to be as creative and ambitious as the City of London and delivering similar benefits for the people of the borough as had been delivered there.

Further to questions from Cabinet members, the Lead Member and officers provided further information on

- Consultation methods and how the views of hard to reach communities, including younger residents would be encouraged, rather than listening only to the loudest or most articulate voices.
- How the new plan proposed an increase in the minimum affordable housing provision from 35 to 40 per cent, split as 85 social rent and 15 intermediate, to help address overcrowding and delays in the housing waiting list.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Approved the publication of the Regulation 18 – Tower Hamlets Draft Local Plan 2038: (Appendix 1 to the report) for formal consultation;
2. Approved the publication of the Regulation 18 – Tower Hamlets Draft Local Plan 2038: Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) and other supplementary information, including draft evidence base studies (as

Table 1) on the Council's website, at the Town Hall and other locations in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, alongside the Tower Hamlets Draft Local Plan 2038.

3. Provided approval to make any amendments to the documents in advance of public consultation commencing. Any such amendments to be made through the delegated authority of the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Mayor.

6.9 Statutory Transfer Scheme to support the proposed transfer of town planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report that sought the Mayor's approval for the return of planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets.

The Mayor welcomed the report, noting it as a necessary administrative decision prior to the return of planning powers.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Confirms their support for the statutory process for the transition of planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets.
2. Delegates any further amendments to and completion of the Statutory Transfer Scheme and supporting documents to the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Mayor.
3. Authorises the Director of Legal Services to complete any legal steps that might be required prior to and as a consequence of the transition of planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets.

6.10 Tower Hamlets Homes Articles of Association and Board of Directors

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report that, prior to the transfer of housing management services back to the council, set out the administrative process, including the appointment of a new board of directors and adoption of a new set of Tower Hamlets Homes Limited Articles of Association to simplify the composition of the board. The report also recommended that a members' voluntary liquidation process is completed to wind up the Company.

The Mayor welcomed the report and proposals, which he noted were temporary arrangements to secure the transfer. He nominated himself,

Councillor Abu Choudhury and Denise Radley as board directors, and indicated he would chair the board.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Agrees to the Tower Hamlets Homes Limited Articles of Association to be changed to the articles set out in Appendix One to the report.
2. Appoints a board of three directors, comprised of council officers and members, as set out in paragraph 3.9.16 of the report.
3. Nominates the following persons as board directors
 - Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Chair of board)
 - Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury
 - Denise Radley, Corporate Director Health and Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive.
4. Agrees the process for winding up Tower Hamlets Homes Limited will be via a members' voluntary liquidation.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

A motion to exclude press and public was not required.

9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

None.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business

None.

10.2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

None.

11. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

12. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None.

The meeting ended at 7.02 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman
Cabinet