

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Council</b>  2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Questions submitted by Members of the Council</b>	

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

## SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions that were submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Mayor, the Speaker or the Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee for this Council meeting.
2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4, questions relating to Executive functions and decisions taken by the Mayor are put to the Mayor unless he delegates such a decision to another Member, who will therefore be responsible for answering the question. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will answer questions directed to the Mayor.
3. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. Council Procedure Rule 10.7 provides for an answer to take the form of a written answer circulated to the questioner, a reference to a published work or a direct oral answer.
5. There is a time limit of thirty minutes at the Council meeting for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any questions not put within this time are dealt with by way of written responses.
6. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

25 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

### **11.1 Question from Councillor Amin Rahman**

Following on from the Mayor's announcement in Cabinet regarding the Council's placement policy that no resident will be sent more than 90 minutes outside of the borough, could the lead member provide an update on what other work is ongoing to retain as many homeless residents in and around Tower Hamlets as possible?

### **11.2 Question from Councillor Abdi Mohamed**

Now that the mayor has announced he is suspending homelessness allocation policy - Can he tell us how he plans to work with officers to put together a revised plan? Will he seek the opinions of staff from the homelessness team who have worked incredibly hard and under intense pressure over the last couple of years?

### **11.3 Question from Councillor Abdul Mannan**

We are proud on this side of the chamber to have invested in policies to protect and enhance the opportunities on offer to our children. Given the decision to retain the two-child benefit cap, what measures can the Council take to ensure that we continue to support children across our borough?

### **11.4 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Can the Mayor inform me whether he and his administration are concerned about the safety of children and this council's safeguarding responsibilities in regard to the proposed decision to house a drug rehabilitation/counselling centre above an early years nursery in Wapping? Can he confirm whether and how these issues were properly assessed before this site was chosen?

### **11.5 Question from Councillor Jahed Choudhury**

Could the Lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for 6 years under the previous administration?

### **11.6 Question from Councillor Amina Ali**

Can the Mayor inform me as to whether he (as mayor), the council (as an institution) or any other senior officers, sought the advice of counsel in relation to the recent Best Value Inspection? If so, and in each case, have council funds been used to seek this advice?

### **11.7 Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir**

Can the Lead Member provide an update on the Best Value Inspection that concluded in July?

### **11.8 Question from Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury**

The law-and-order situation in Mile End ward is major concern. The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) has reported that they are lacking adequate resources, particularly in terms

of manpower, and are requesting additional hours. Could the cabinet member clarify what steps will be taken to support the SNT in improving law and order in the Mile End ward?

### **11.9 Question from Councillor Bodrul Choudhury**

Given the Government's decision to remove the Winter Fuel Allowance from nearly 10 million pensioners (including many vulnerable people), and knowing that 40% of households in Tower Hamlets suffered from fuel poverty last winter, what steps is the Council taking to mitigate against this cut, which will most likely plunge even more of our residents below this poverty line?

### **11.10 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin**

Will the Mayor share details of how CIL and Neighbourhood CiL has been used in the last two years and how it is being planned to be used on the Isle of Dogs this year?

### **11.11 Question from Councillor Iqbal Hussain**

It has been a year since the LGA Corporate Peer Review which looked at various functions of the council, and areas for improvement. The LGA Peer Review team are about to return to check on progress against their recommendations. Can the Lead Member feedback on where we are in relation to this, and is there anything we should be worried about?

### **11.12 Question from Councillor Marc Francis**

Can the Mayor and Lead Member inform me what action is being taken to stop cars and mopeds using the new bridge at Monier road that is supposed to be for buses, cyclists and pedestrians only?

### **11.13 Question from Councillor Suluk Ahmed**

Can the lead member update me on the improvements being made to the housing options service?

### **11.14 Question from Councillor Amy Lee**

Can the lead member provide a full update on the future of St George's leisure centre?

### **11.15 Question from Councillor Cllr Ahmodur Khan**

Can the Lead Member explain how a Homecare provider under the previous Administration was awarded a contract initially valued at £5m which then ballooned to a staggering £62m – an increase of £57m!

### **11.16 Question from Councillor Sabina Khan**

How many residents are currently placed in temporary accommodation?

### **11.17 Question from Councillor Bellal Uddin**

Given the recent and continuing threats from the far right, what is the council doing to maintain community cohesion and protect at risk groups in the borough?

### **11.18 Question from Councillor Asma Begum**

Can the Lead member inform me as a percentage how many secondary school children are taking up the free school meal offer from the council and whether the council has been made aware of any concerns regarding the quality of the meals?

### **11.19 Question from Councillor Abdul Malik**

Given the Council's recent receipt of a Youth Justice SEND Quality Lead Status with a Child First Commendation from the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers, can the Lead Member update on what other progress has been made following the failed Youth Justice inspection of July 2022?

### **11.20 Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain**

There have recently been an increased number of road accidents in Bromley South in recent months – particularly on Violet Road. Will the lead member commit to visiting the accident hotspot with me and ensuring this council puts in place measures to reduce road deaths?

### **11.21 Question from Councillor James King**

Could the lead member inform me as to how the council would intend to enforce its proposed dog PSPO? Will THEOs begin patrolling dog walking hot spots?

### **11.22 Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam:**

Months ago council officers accompanied me on a walk around my ward and noted that there was an increased number of road traffic accidents on the Old Ford Road – Can the lead member confirm whether there has been any follow up on this and whether the council is planning to put in place any safety measures that would work to decrease the number of accidents?

### **11.23 Question from Councillor Rebecka Sultana**

What progress is the council making in reducing the number of children being unable to get EHCPs within the legal time frame? What support is the council giving schools to be able to care for SEND children?

### **11.24 Question from Councillor Leelu Ahmed:**

How many residents have qualified for the council's new council tax reduction scheme?

### **11.25 Question from Councillor Peter Golds**

The government recently announced that they will follow the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's recommendation to offer Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans to Disabled and vulnerable residents of high-rise blocks. The Inquiry's report also recognises that associating risk with a particular height of building is arbitrary. Does the council plan to extend the offer of PEEPs to Disabled and vulnerable residents of all housing blocks in the borough?