

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS****MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.04 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 2016****COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,  
LONDON E14 2BG.****Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs	Councillor Clare Harrison
Councillor Khaless Uddin Ahmed	Councillor Danny Hassell
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Mahbub Alam	Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Shah Alam	Councillor Shiria Khatun
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Shahed Ali	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Abdul Asad	Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah
Councillor Rachel Blake	Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Chris Chapman	Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Dave Chesterton	Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Andrew Cregan	Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Julia Dockerill	Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor David Edgar	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Rachael Saunders
Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Peter Golds	Councillor Andrew Wood
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	

**The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Khaless Uddin Ahmed in the Chair**

During the meeting, the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Minutes are presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda. The order the business was taken in at the meeting was as follows:

- Item 1 - Apologies for absence.
- Item 2 – Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
- Item 3 – Minutes.
- Item 4 – Announcements.
- Item 13.1 – Urgent Motion regarding the Ian Mikardo School
- Items 5 – Petitions.
- Item 6 – Public Questions. (6.4-6.5,6.7)
- Item 7 – Mayor’s Report.
- Item 8 – Members Questions (8.1 – 8.4, 8.6-8.12)
- Item 9. 1 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2015/16

- Item 9. 2 - Appointment of Members to the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board
- Item 11.1 - Treasury Management Outturn Report 2015/16
- Item 11.2 - Appointments related to the Standards Regime

Before commencing the formal business, the Speaker of the Council stated that Members would be aware that the past month had witnessed a number of outrageous attacks on peaceful people and societies. The thoughts of the Council were with the victims of these attacks, in particular, those affected by the Bastille Day attack in Nice, France, the attacks in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 1-2 July, the murder of Jo Cox MP, the attack on the Gay nightclub in Orlando and the Istanbul Airport attack.

He stated that it was vital that the Council showed solidarity with those affected and underlined it's condemnation to those who chose to undertake these acts.

For all those effected by the atrocities and all other attacks, the Council rose to observe a minutes silence.

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Craig Aston
- Councillor Ohid Ahmed
- Councillor Asma Begum
- Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury
- Councillor Abjol Miah
- Councillor Maium Miah
- Councillor Joshua Peck

Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillor Clare Harrison

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

## **3. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 18 May 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

With regret, the Speaker of the Council announced that Patricia Mary Thompson, former Civic Mayor of this Borough had sadly passed away. Patricia was the Civic Mayor in 1981-2. On behalf of the Council, he sent his condolences to her family.

Following which, the Mayor made a statement on a controversial appointment by the Ian Mikardo School. He reported that he first became aware of the issues last month and in view of the level of public unease about the appointment, he had requested that Officers investigate the role of the Council in this case and establish the facts of the case. The findings of the investigation would be published on the Council's website and circulated to Members.

He then presented the key findings of the investigation, explaining the appointment process and the issues around this. He stated that whilst he strongly believed in rehabilitation, he did not support this particular appointment in view of the circumstances of the case.

In terms of addressing the issues, he recognised that the appointment of staff was a matter for the school and that the Council had no control over this. Nevertheless, he felt that it was important that the Council were involved in controversial appointments to ensure that the wider impact on the community and community cohesion was taken into account. Therefore, to ensure this, he had amended the Council's procedures to ensure, that in future, the Corporate Director of Children Services be consulted on controversial appointments and that the Council's Safer Recruitment Guidance should include guidance on fixed terms appointments. It should be noted that these requirements would not apply to academies and free schools (except on a voluntary basis). However, it was hoped that they would be sensitive to such matters. He would continue to meet with the school and the community to understand their concerns and to identify how the Council can address these.

He strongly condemned the recent attacks on the school and called for a calm and measured response to the matter based on the facts of the case.

#### **Procedural Motion**

Following the statement, Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, a procedural motion "that under Procedure Rule 14.1.5, Rule 13.1 be suspended to enable an urgent motion regarding the Ian Mikardo School to be considered". The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

Council requested and it was agreed that the name of the individual in question be redacted from the motions on the subject matter within the meeting agenda.

## **5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**

### **5.1 Petition relating to Sex Education in Schools**

Jahed Choudhury addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Rachael Saunders, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services then responded to the matters raised in the petition. She explained that Culloden Primary School, as an academy school, had control over the content of the sex education curriculum. Whilst it was of great importance to ensure that schools protected children, it was also important that parents were consulted on the content of sex education lessons. She pledged that the Council would work with parents to ensure this.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Children's Services for a written response within 28 days.

### **5.2 Petition relating to Special Responsibility Allowances**

Glyn Robbins addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He reported that since taking up office, he had scrapped the Mayor's car and posts within the Mayor Office generating a considerable amount of savings. The savings far exceeded the costs of the new Mayoral advisor posts that were in budget. In addition, he had decided not to accept half of the increase in his Mayoral allowance agreed by the Council meeting in May 2016. He also commented that he felt that it was a mistake to reduce the Mayoral allowance in 2014.

He considered that it was important that Councillors' were paid a reasonable allowance to compensate for the personal and professional sacrifices they made in carrying out their duties. Therefore, he stood by the decision to increase Councillors allowances. He pledged that there would be no further increases before the next Mayoral election.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Chief Executive, for a written response within 28 days.

### **5.3 Petition relating to Save our Youth Clubs**

Petitioners addressed the meeting and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in the petition. He advised that he had been working hard to address the issues, and had issued a Members' briefing setting out proposals for the service. In view of this, he expressed regret at the circulation of misinformation by opponents regarding the nature of these plans. The first point to note was that these were interim measures to address urgent problems within the youth services (such as anti - social behaviour issues, problems with premises) and to even

out services. Even under these plans, the Borough would still have the second largest youth service in London.

He stressed that the Council were committed to providing an excellent youth services and a strong budget. The Administration would be examining the issues in further detail and would be bringing forward long term proposals for the service in the Autumn. There would also be an Overview and Scrutiny spotlight discussion on the subject tomorrow.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Children's Services for a written response within 28 days.

**5.4 Petition Debate – Boishakhi Mela.**

Mohammed Hannan addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and the Council then debated the matters raised by the petition.

Following the debate but before the Mayor responded to the matters raised in the petition, the Speaker adjourned the meeting at 20.55pm. The meeting reconvened at 21:05pm.

The Mayor reported that he was not aware that any meeting between himself and the objectors had been cancelled and he was still willing to meet with them. He also advised it would have been a matter for the Council's Licensing Committee to have considered the issues. However no objections were made about the application. Indeed there was a great deal of local support for the application.

Nevertheless, the Council was very mindful of the concerns about anti-social behaviour from the event. Therefore, there would be additional measures to minimise the impact of the event. Furthermore, if there was any evidence of harassment against women or girls, the Council would be vigorous in dealing with such issues.

The Mayor also reported that he worked hard to represent all sections of the community and that the events steering group was overwhelming from the Bengali community. Should the event not be successful, consideration would be given to relocating it back to Victoria Park.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Chief Executive, for a written response within 28 days.

**6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The following questions and in each case supplementary questions were put and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member:-

**6.4 Question from Lisa Stepanovic**

Who is the governing body of a school accountable to?

Who monitors the head teachers attendance and how is it scrutinised?

**Response by Mayor John Biggs**

The answer to that is quite technical. For community schools maintained by the local authority the governing body is responsible for the conduct and decision making of the school. The Council can intervene in certain circumstances if there is a cause for concern. However, ultimately the school is accountable to Department for Education and the Secretary of State.

I think this highlights that with the education reforms, in the old days the local authority would have significant powers of intervention and involvement and nowadays it doesn't. So the only place you can go in the end is the Secretary of State and I don't find that satisfactory. That doesn't mean that a government can't change the law and create a far greater degree of independence (this was done by both Labour and Conservative Governments, a greater extent by the Conservatives). But it does create a potential vacuum if people are unhappy. I'm very happy in my role as Mayor and for Councillors to be involved in meetings and they have been. But we don't have a formal responsibility for managing the school.

The head teacher is accountable to the governing body and any absence will be reported to the chair of the governing body.

**Supplementary question from Lisa Stepanovic**

Does the Council think it's acceptable that children who are described as the most vulnerable young people in the UK are able to view the horrific articles online referring to a teacher and supposed role-model as a racist killer? Whether he is or he isn't, is irrelevant. It harms their mental health and that is something I am bothered by. Does the Council feel it's acceptable that when those same children question the articles online that it is trivialised in such a way that it shows no regard for Mr Shibli Rahman or the family he left behind?

Children told me that they were not allowed to challenge this. I was told I couldn't challenge it and I was also told the community had no right to challenge this. I was told this by the chair of governors and also the head teacher. I was bullied and I resigned from the very project I created and also from the governing body. Surely this kind of disregard for our community and emotional neglect for the vulnerable students at Ian Mikardo high school had no place in Tower Hamlets. This is neglect. I believe it is a safeguarding issue. It is divisive and to silence and shut down young people from the community who raise these concerns, I believe, has the potential to encourage extremism, further divide and hate.

**Mayor John Biggs response to the supplementary question:**

I am very happy to sit down with you again – I know you sat down with one or more Councillors already. I am very happy to ensure you have a meeting with Debbie Jones, the Council's Director of Children's Services to discuss your concerns. Any safeguarding concern needs to be really and properly investigated and dealt with by the local authority. Safeguarding is one of the areas where the local authority still has a very important statutory role, so if there are concerns in that area they need to be thoroughly investigated. I agree with you that if young people with impressionable minds are reading stuff on the internet, then the way that is managed by the school is a matter of legitimate concern and, as I said in my earlier answer, is properly a matter to be investigated by the head teacher and the governors. If that isn't properly dealt with it becomes an issue within our community.

**6.5 Question from Bethan Lant**

The Refugees Welcome in Tower Hamlets Campaign is looking forward to the day when our borough is able to welcome Syrian refugees – as has happened on a small scale in 5 other London boroughs, including Islington (which is resettling 10 families) and Camden (which is resettling 24 families). We want to thank the Mayor for his continued support on this issue and for meeting with us to discuss it late last year.

Our group also wants to support the council to make refugee resettlement a success in the borough, providing the best welcome possible. So, can the Mayor provide an update on the progress being made towards resettling Syrian refugees in Tower Hamlets under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme? Is he able to tell us how many families the Council is currently planning to welcome to Tower Hamlets?

**Response by Mayor John Biggs**

As you know, I and the Council are committed, unanimously, to supporting Syrian refugees. This has proved to be a horrendously bureaucratic, long and drawn out process of being able to receive refugees in our Borough. I commend your campaign. I find it bizarre that with the Borough's proud history of welcoming refugees it is so difficult to receive refugees nowadays. We are currently liaising with the Home Office about the scheme. Planning works are already underway. We have already received two unaccompanied asylum seeking children from Syria. The budgets – and this is common to most inner-London authorities – are providing for, I think, three families to be received into the Borough. I find it almost embarrassing to say that. Because of the negotiations with the departments in government and the financial assurances required and the amounts of money the Government is making available, I think they are predominantly dispersing Syrian refugees to other, lower cost parts of the country. So it is partly about bureaucracy, partly about the cost of housing. I recently attended one of many Iftar events, where it was suggested there was an appetite for greater community financial support for this initiative and I would welcome that. That is indicative of a tradition in the East End of people being generous. I know we are a generous community.

**Supplementary question from Bethan Lant**

I would say that three families seems a pitifully small amount. It does sound ridiculous, as you say, that that seems to be the maximum when we have such a large migrant community in the Borough and so many resources that could welcome people here. I commend the fact that we've taken two unaccompanied minors recently and I hope we'll extend a welcome to more unaccompanied minors, knowing how vulnerable and how much in need those young people are. I hope we have your assurance that you will try to increase those numbers if there is any opportunity to do so?

**Mayor John Biggs response to the supplementary question:**

I would agree with that. I have a newspaper report in front of me that tells me that more than one third of local councils in the country are refusing to accept any Syrian refugees. On the other hand, Gloucestershire and Kent have accepted several hundred refugees. Lancashire has offered space for up to 600 refugees as well. It depends on household sizes of course, but yes, I want us to help and do more and I hope we'll be able to do that.

**6.7 Question from Eileen Short**

Will the Council follow the example of Camden and Islington Councils and write directly to its tenants and leaseholders to inform them of the Housing and Planning Act, invite them to a forum to discuss this, and ask local housing associations to do the same; and what measures is it taking to work with other Councils in resisting the Act?

**Response by Councillor Sirajul Islam (Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Performance)**

(For transparency, I would like to declare that I am a Council tenant. Though I do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest, this matter does impact directly on me and my family.)

We are taking the threat presented by the Housing and Planning Act very seriously. Indeed, you will know that during the parliamentary process for the bill we have made multiple representations to Government and support our MPs in opposing the bill. We are also debating this subject later on the agenda, as there is a related motion. Sadly the implementation of the Act is having a significant impact on the Borough and as a Council we are doing all we can to protect residents from the worst of it. We recently launched the housing strategy consultation which seeks to address the impact of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. Consultation is underway and residents are engaging in the process. We have a duty to make residents aware of the impact of the Act and this is why we have already published an article in East End Life, Our East End, multiple Council website articles and press statements recently in the Tower Hamlets Homes newsletter as well. The Council debated and supported a motion on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 which called on the Mayor and all Councillors to actively campaign to highlight the

disastrous consequences of the Bill. As a result the Mayor and Lead Members, myself and Rachel Blake, have attended quite a few meetings organised by 'Kill the Bill', namely on the Cranbrook, Collingwood, and Ocean estates, outside Albert Jacob House and most recently last week in the Tramshed. In essence we are doing quite a lot and engaging with your campaign as well. I applaud the work you are doing on council housing; it is important and something we are all committed to doing as much as possible to support.

### **Supplementary question from Eileen Short**

Does the Council agree that the Act is unfair and destructive and unworkable; that residents need more information and a chance to discuss it at meetings or forums; and that it is the Council's responsibility to play an active role in making that happen?

### **Councillor Sirajul Islam response to the supplementary question:**

Yes to all of that. When I spoke at the Cranbrook meeting I believe I spoke very passionately about this issue, that I felt it was more about social cleansing and the impact it would have on council tenants.

In terms of providing more information, of course. The Council has done quite a lot (I have already read out the list to you) and we are happy to do more. Regarding meetings and forums, again myself and Rachel have attended quite a lot of meetings. You have arranged and kindly invited us to meetings and we will be happy to attend further meetings

Questions 6.1-6.3 and 6.6 were not put due to the absence of the questioners. Written responses would be provided to the questions. (Note: The written responses are included in Appendix 'A' to these minutes.)

## **7. MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor made his report to the Council, referring to his written report circulated at the meeting, summarising key events, engagements and meetings since the last Council meeting.

When the Mayor had completed his report and at the invitation of the Speaker the Leaders of the other political groups then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

## **8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

The following questions and in each case a supplementary question were put (except where indicated) and were responded to by the Mayor, relevant Executive Member, or Councillor.

### **8.1 Question from Councillor Clare Harrisson**

(For transparency, I would like to declare that I am an employee of UNISON, although I do not work in ethical care.)

Can the Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services inform members how many people, including home care staff and service users, will benefit from the Council's adoption of UNISON's Ethical Care Charter?

### **Response by Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs (Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services)**

I am really proud that we are fulfilling one of the Mayor's flagship manifesto commitments with this policy. The great thing about this charter is it's about ethics and dignity both for staff and service users. In terms of residents, it will benefit all 2,000 of the vulnerable residents who currently receive homecare services. Their care workers will have proper time, will be paid properly and treated better, so they can provide care based on dignity, safety and wellbeing.

In terms of care workers, we estimate that there will be around 1,300 care workers who will benefit from the adoption of the Charter in a number of ways. One which I know many care workers have spoken to me and the Mayor about is about guaranteeing a fixed hours contract, moving away from zero hour contracts, which will be at least 12 hours per week and moving up to 16 hours per week by end 2018 and a number of other benefits.

### **Supplementary question from Councillor Clare Harrisson**

One of the things that informed our conversation on this was a report that was published by, I believe, Islington Council a couple of years into their implementation that looked at the increase in qualifications of people working in the service and increased service user satisfaction. Will you guarantee to produce a similar report in, say 18 months' time to see how it has done?

### **Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs response to the supplementary question**

We will be robustly monitoring the Ethical Care Charter through the contracts and it will be a compulsory part of those contracts, so if the home care providers fail to deliver they will be held to account by us. I will be requiring regular updates from officers and I am sure we can produce an annual report of the nature you describe. I am really proud of this, not least because it shows how a Labour council working together with staff (many care workers spoke to me and the Mayor about this) and with the unions can really improve quality of services despite the government cuts that we face.

### **8.2 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman**

Has John Biggs had a word with Cllr Whitelock Gibbs, who is reviewing the Tower Hamlets Health & Wellbeing Board (TH H&WBB) and consulting on

how to cut £5m from the Public Health Budget? Will he clarify whether he has asked her to ensure there is a balanced ethnic minority (BAME) representation in TH H&WBB so that BAME health and wellbeing concerns can be met and the population is not disproportionately affected or disenfranchised by these new and potentially devastating choice of budget cuts?

**Response by Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs (Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services)**

I will not take lessons from your side of the room on diversity; I'm really proud to be part of a gender and ethnically balanced Cabinet and group on this side of the Chamber. In relation to your specific question on the Health and Wellbeing Board, I am honoured that the Mayor has asked me to chair the Health and Wellbeing Board. It allows us to co-chair the Board with the Clinical Commissioning Group who are a really critical health partner. This is in response to an external review that recommended we make a number of changes to the Board, which is on the agenda later this evening. Part of the changes that I am keen to make are about being a much more open and outwardly facing Board and that will include engaging with black and minority ethnic communities as well as a number of other groups.

On the public health cuts, it is the Tory government that has chosen to cut the public health grant by millions of pounds. I and other lead members in London strongly oppose these cuts, both publicly and privately and officers have responded to the consultation opposing them as well. You were part of the debate at Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the details of these cuts and I am happy to discuss further with you.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Oliur Rahman**

Does the Mayor or the Lead Member think it is acceptable that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council has official representation from the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church and no official representative from the Muslim faith?

**Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs response to the supplementary question**

I do not chair the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Health and Wellbeing Board, which I chair, has members as required by statute, though we have supplemented them in other ways. We will be happy to provide a separate response to your question about the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**8.3 Question from Councillor Andrew Cregan**

What assessment has been made of the economic impacts of the 'Brexit' vote?

**Response by Mayor John Biggs**

I am disappointed with the referendum vote, particularly as 68 percent of Tower Hamlets residents voted to remain in the European Union and I was clear during the campaign that the East End would be better off staying in the European Union. But we now need to work with the decision and we need to rely on our leadership in Parliament to take us through that.

In terms of an assessment of the impact on our economy, it is too early to say. There is obviously going to be an impact on the property market and there may well be an impact on the financial services industry, which some people may consider to be an alien part of our Borough, but for many people it is not. More importantly is the impact on London's wider economy and the service economy, which is the engine of London's economy, is potentially very severe and we need to work with others and watch that very carefully and champion the role of London in the UK, which can only survive and prosper if it has strong trading links with other places, in particular Europe.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Andrew Cregan**

I would like to add, as Chair of the Pensions Committee, I too am very concerned about the adverse consequences of the vote on investment returns and interest rates impacting savers approaching retirement in the Borough.

As most of the tools to deal with Brexit and the negotiations over the settlement itself with the rest of the EU are out of the hands of this chamber, I would like to see Tower Hamlets working in tandem with the Mayor of London taking a bullish approach in lobbying the government for an outcome that secures our continued access to the single market (which is critical for London's economy) and that means promoting the continuation of freedom of movement of people as well – 'a Norwegian Model'. Not just because the freedom of movement of people is necessary to ensure the freedom of movement of goods, services and capital, but because EU citizens that live and work in Tower Hamlets and across the UK make a vital and extremely positive contribution to our economy and our society. So will the Mayor stand with Sadiq Khan in pushing for such a resolution?

**Response to the supplementary question**

Of course I will stand with Sadiq and other local authority leaders in London, the majority, 28, of which supported staying in the European Union. I think another issue we need to work very clearly on is the equalities aspect, because many Londoners depend on our service economy and the opportunities our City has. The new Prime Minister has stated very clearly she is committed to something, something she almost certainly can't achieve I think, which is to secure extraordinarily low levels of migration to our country, which is quite an open country, and I think that's very worrying in terms of the community relations impact for a Borough like Tower Hamlets and for a city like London.

#### **8.4 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood**

Will the Mayor inform the council as to what percentage of the 43,589 vehicle owners in Tower Hamlets responded to the Council's recent consultation on the 20 mph speed limit which ended on the 20th June and what is the response of residents to the efficacy of the borough wide limit fixed at 20mph?

#### **Response by Councillor Ayas Miah (Cabinet Member for Environment)**

The report on the consultation is not yet finalised, but I will ensure that you have the full result when it is ready. This is a good opportunity to share some initial findings on the introduction of the 20 miles per hour limit in our borough. I am pleased to say that the early indicators are quite positive and quite good. Analysis of the data from the nine months following the introduction of the limit has shown that the overall number of collisions has reduced by 53 percent. This includes the number of fatal and serious collisions reducing by 55 and 56 percent respectively whilst the number of slight collisions has fallen by 30 percent. Overall average vehicle speed across the south west sites has also fallen by 1.4 miles per hour to 18.5 miles per hour. This is just a snapshot, however I will keep this under review, but the initial picture is positive and I am sure Councillor Wood will welcome it.

#### **Supplementary question from Councillor Andrew Wood**

Actually I almost didn't make the meeting tonight. I was driving through my ward and, as seems to happen a very frequently nowadays, the vehicle ahead coming towards me was overtaking slower vehicles and came into my lane. I had to break sharply to avoid hitting them and it does seem to be fairly common nowadays that people are more aggressive and overtaking more. As part of this is 20 miles per hour review, are you looking at driver behaviour more generally and whether that has changed or will be changed as a result?

#### **Councillor Ayas Miah response to the supplementary question**

When we have the full result of the survey and feedback of course we will work together to respond and fulfil that requirement. Our officers and we are working together in order to achieve it. I think we should wait for the full results.

#### **8.6 Question from Councillor Mahbub Alam**

Can the current Mayor confirm which, if any, nurseries, children centres, council's satellite or primary buildings, and critically youth centres, have been closed since June 2015 or will be closed by 2018?

#### **Response by Councillor Rachael Saunders (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services)**

We control three childcare sites and have no plans to close them. We have 12 children's centres and no plans to close them. Everything else in that sector is either run by schools or private businesses. No nursery classes or schools have been closed since 2015. As the Councillor will know, the Council does not control this provision. We are not aware of any plans by governing bodies to close such provision in the future. One school is considering opening such a provision. No maintained nursery schools have been closed since 2015. No designated children's centres have been closed since 2015. There are no plans to close children's centres

The majority of childcare in the borough, over 99 percent, is run by private childcare business or schools and we don't make decisions about whether to open or close them. Two children's centres have local authority childcare on site, John Smith and Overland. We own one building, Mary Sambrook, from which childcare is offered. Places at these day nurseries are funded by DfE Place Funding. The landlord that owns Queen Mary Day Nursery has expressed a desire to take back their building and we have re-provided that service locally so there are no jobs that have been lost in that process and the services have been re-provided in collaboration with St Paul's Way Primary School.

#### **Supplementary question from Councillor Mahbub Alam**

Is your memory working? Two years ago when you were the leader of Tower Hamlets Labour Group, you came with some mothers of children from Tower Hamlets nursery to the Cabinet and you urged them to come to the Council to protest against any idea of closing those nurseries. You must have forgot that you told those mothers that you didn't want to close any of the nurseries yourself. Just two years later at the budget scrutiny committee meeting, you gave a commitment that no nursery schools would be to shut down, but you have forgotten about this too because you have closed Queen Mary Nursery, or are you denying that? Secondly can you tell us which youth centres you want to close down? There is no lie about it, tell us which ones you really want to close down.

#### **Councillor Rachael Saunders response to the supplementary question**

I object to you using words like your lies, especially when you are reading from a supplementary question you had written before you had heard my answer. You used the word 'lie' about an answer that I gave, which was a question you had written before you'd heard my answer. I didn't tell a lie and I have not told you a lie. In relation to Queen Mary Day Nursery, we are in a situation where, firstly, asbestos and legionnaires disease was found in the building, so it is not safe to run from that building and now we are in a situation where the landlord wishes to sell the building. What we are doing in response to that is to provide childcare as usual on a nearby site, St Paul's Way Foundation Primary School. No jobs have been lost. No places have been lost. Unlike other local authority day nurseries, Queen Mary's operates in a rented building and the landlord can take that building back and we understand a decision has been taken to develop or market the property. No staff have lost their jobs and no parents have lost a free childcare place in

response to the move. In response to the question on youth service, what I think you are trying to imply is that the changes are temporary and you want an answer as to what will be part of the permanent model. I am grateful you recognise the current model is interim. We haven't made decisions yet about the permanent model and if young persons wish to talk to us about what the permanent model looks like, I would be really grateful to speak to them.

### **8.7 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed**

What investment is the Council making in local healthcare provision?

### **Response by Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs (Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services)**

Through our public health services we invest millions in prevention, health promotion and tackling health inequalities. This includes GP services, pharmacy work, health visiting, breastfeeding support, sexual health services and drug and alcohol services. More specifically, we know from residents and GPs there is a lot of concern at the moment about pressure on GP surgeries and not being able to get appointments, not being able to be seen quickly, particularly when new housing is coming on stream. That is why we are investing £15.8 million of Section 106 money (money we have got from developers) to modernise GP practices and create some more green spaces that will benefit residents' health. There are four GP practices particularly that I want to highlight: Aberfeldy, Sutton's Wharf, Goodmans Fields and William Cotton Place. I know that all of those areas' residents and GPs have been clamouring for much needed improvements to the building and expansions so they can see more patients and I'm really pleased that the Mayor has agreed to those proposals.

### **No supplementary question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed**

### **8.9 Question from Councillor Candida Ronald**

Could the Mayor or Cabinet Member please provide an update on the investigation into the THH data protection incident, after the blog 'Love Wapping' alleged an unauthorised use of Council's tenants' data as part of the 2014 and 2015 Tower Hamlets Mayoral campaigns?

### **Response by Mayor John Biggs**

I'm extremely grateful for this question because there is an update and the update is contained in a report produced by Tower Hamlets Homes, which I imagine you have received. What that tells you is that the investigation into what the address list was that was used ascertains, without any credible doubt, that the list was obtained from a list provided in response to a Members enquiry by Tower Hamlets Homes by the then Mayor's Office and the Mayor's Office appears to have passed on confidential address details to both the previous mayor in his election campaigning and the Independent Group's mayoral candidate for campaigning in last year's campaign. This is clearly a breach of data security and I think it shows a breach of trust. It's a

matter that we hopefully can blot out in this Borough, but it does require people to recognise that they have to behave and act within the law when they are trusted with public information.

### **Supplementary question from Councillor Candida Ronald**

Does it worry you that that information has not yet been accounted for and still could be illegally used for political campaigning in the future?

### **Mayor John Biggs response to the supplementary question**

I think the foundation of that is that we all have, as elected members, access to confidential information, such as the address details of people. When someone comes to you with case work, that doesn't give you the right to transfer that information to your political party, for example, and use it to send propaganda. If people have a list of addresses like this was then to use that in a direct mail campaign or to target voters is a fundamental breach of trust. It is a misuse of data and it should be stamped upon. Now that Tower Hamlets Homes has ascertained that was the source of this data, we need both a safeguard to prevent it happening again and we need to look at the behavioural issues that lay behind it because, clearly, there are people in this chamber, I think, who have a problem in discerning between what they should do and what is not proper.

### **8.10 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan**

How many homeless families have been helped from Bed & Breakfast into Temporary Accommodation since July 2015?

### **Response by Councillor Sirajul Islam (Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Performance)**

I'm not surprised Councillor Khan is concerned with families in bed and breakfast, because at the time she left office there were 232 families in this sad situation. However, I am pleased to say that 12 months later, after a year of concerted political effort from the Mayor and myself and hard work from officers, that number has reduced by 68 percent to just seventy five families. In the period, 794 new bed and breakfast bookings were made, though this includes single household accommodation on a discretionary basis and assuming that 75 per cent of all B&B placements are families, this would indicate in the region of 520 families have been moved from B&B in the 13 months to June 2016. I hope that Councillor Khan welcomes this progress and joins me in congratulating officers in reducing the embarrassingly high numbers she left with us.

### **Supplementary question from Councillor Rabina Khan**

The mayor has been busy, hasn't he? He's been busy exporting homeless families out of the Borough. He exported 1,000 families out of Tower Hamlets into places alongside Kent, all the way into Gillingham, all the way into Dartford. Why do you feel that it was an investment to invest in temporary

accommodation outside of this Borough? I will give you an example: in Chatham, there is a block of flats there that were newly refurbished with new kitchens, all ready and waiting for bed and breakfast families to be exported out of this Borough into Kent.

### **Councillor Sirajul Islam response to the supplementary question**

Last June, when Mayor Biggs took office, we inherited almost 200 homeless families living in B&B for months and months and months. This Council was breaking the law. By law you can only keep families in B&B for a maximum of six months. This Council, under the old administration and Councillor Khan's leadership placed people in B&B for months and months and months. If those people went to the ombudsman then we would have been in serious problems. We took a leadership decision to move hundreds of families into accommodation in order to meet that obligation. I understand Councillor Khan was passionately advocating people moving to Kent at an O&S sub-committee meeting on Monday night, so I don't know why you've changed your mind now. We as an administration are very, very passionate about homeless people. We have reduced B&B six-week stay to 19 at this stage from 219, so that is progress and that is a commitment from us.

### **8.11 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin**

Can the Mayor update Full Council on some of the key results of the recent Annual Residents' Survey?

### **Response by Mayor John Biggs**

The residents' survey was a survey of 1,000 local residents, carried out by a reputable firm and done scientifically. It reports that 71 percent of residents surveyed were satisfied with the way the Council runs things. It was up six percent on last year. Half of the eighteen services monitored have seen an improvement in services ratings whilst none saw a decline. We saw a big increase in the percentage of people who thought the Council was doing a better job than one year ago, up by 17 percent to 61 percent. That is still too low a percentage. Almost three quarters, 72 percent, of those surveyed said they trusted the Council. The majority of people remain positive in their views of the area: 83 percent of residents are satisfied with the area as a place to live and most feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get along. There are still many, many areas where we need work to improve things. The reality is that, yes, we have made improvements and we should be proud of those, but we have many further challenges and that increase of 17 percent moves us, really, only to around the London average or what you should expect for your average authority. We need to aspire to a lot better than that. We have made progress, we are digging ourselves out of a hole, but we need to do a lot more to demonstrate we are meeting the whole range of needs of local people.

**Supplementary question from Helal Uddin**

It is very helpful to know that there is that 17 percent an increase in resident confidence compared to a year ago and we highly appreciate it. Could you also touch a little bit on whether engagement with the public would help us to build more connection, give people more confidence and empower them to engage more in future?

**Mayor John Biggs response to the supplementary question**

As you know, you have been appointed as the mayoral advisor for this very area, for working better on community liaison and consultation so we do engage local people. People do not necessarily want to spend every night of the week in meetings at a church hall or a community centre about technical issues, but people do want to be listened to and we need to show that we listen to them and are accountable to them. I am proud of what we've done so far and we need to do more to be a responsive council and I am pleased that you are part of our Team, Councillor Uddin.

**8.12 Question from Councillor Julia Dockerill**

Further to our meeting on 31 May and his site visit on 1 July, what plans has the Mayor devised to improve Tower Hill's functioning, appearance and relationship with surrounding areas to ensure our borough makes best use of this incredible tourist asset?

**Response by Councillor Denise Jones**

As you know, the Tower of London is a World Heritage Site and it is in this Borough. It is the finest historic asset that we have and for many people that come here it is their first introduction to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A lot of people don't even realise it is in Tower Hamlets. It is therefore important that the Borough project its best face and not only that it looks good, but also functions effectively. For that reason the Mayor has requested that the Council's new Local Plan provides a clear steer on the future of this area and sets out the Council's ambitions for the area in terms of standard of design and layout. This will be done in consultation with the local community and stakeholders, including Historic Royal Palaces, TFL and neighbouring boroughs. There have been a number of complaints recently from the Tower of London, Trinity House and other stakeholders around that area about street cleansing in the area and other issues including ice cream vans, so we will continue to work with advice from the City of London to make sure that the area is cleaned up properly.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Julia Dockerill**

I wanted to ask about the street cleansing issues and whether there are any plans that have been devised specifically to deal with the bin problems that we have been having?

**Councillor Denise Jones response to the supplementary question**

We are actually waiting at the moment for a meeting with the City of London, who have offered to suggest some new ways of doing that. Also the Tower of London have said that they clean up the area around the Tower of London and they are quite happy to move up a little bit, next to the Trinity Gardens, that we own, and deal with the rubbish near the station which is causing a problem. There will be more information shortly.

Question 8.5 was withdrawn by the questioner due to the similarities in content with question 8.4. Question 8.8 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. Questions 8.13 - 27 were not put due to lack of time. Written responses would be provided to the questions. (Note: The written responses are included in Appendix 'A' to these minutes.)

**Extension of time limit for the meeting**

Mayor John Biggs **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, a procedural motion, that "under Procedure Rule 15.11.7 the meeting be extended for 15 minutes, to consider and vote on the reports for consideration (Items 9.1,9.2, 11.1,11.2). The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

**9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES****9.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2015/16**

Councillor John Pierce, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the Committee's Annual Report for 2015-16.

The recommendation set out in the report was put to the vote and was **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council note the contents of the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2015-16.

**9.2 Appointment of Members to the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Law Probity and Governance regarding appointments to the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs reported that the list of elected representatives needed adjusting to reflect the decisions taken (as set out in resolution 1 below).

The recommendations set out in the report were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED:**

1. That it be noted that at its meeting on 21 June 2016 the Health and Wellbeing Board discussed amendments to its membership as reflected in the amended Terms of Reference attached as Appendix 2 to the report to be amended to include the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services and remove the post of the Executive Advisor on Adult Social Care.
2. That it be noted that the Mayor has agreed the updated Terms of Reference in respect of membership and has nominated:
  - (a) That the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult services be the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board;
  - (b) That the Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance becomes a voting member of the Board; and
  - (c) That a Councillor from the largest opposition group be appointed as a non-voting as a stakeholder and that that Councillor be put forward by such group.
3. That the appointment of co-opted members to the Board be agreed.
4. That a Councillor from the largest opposition group be appointed as a stakeholder to the Board.

**10. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS/EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)**

There was no business to transact under this agenda item.

**11. OTHER BUSINESS****11.1 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2015/16**

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director of Resources setting out the Treasury Management Outturn for 2015/16.

The recommendations set out in the report were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council note:

1. The Treasury Management activities and performance against targets for the twelve months to 31 March 2016.

2. The Pension Fund investments balance (set out in section 9 of Annex A of the report).
3. The Council's investments as at 31 March 2016 (as in Appendix 2 of the report).
4. The Prudential indicators outturn for 2015/16 (set out in Appendix 1 of the report).

## 11.2 Appointments related to the Standards Regime

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director of Law Probity and Governance regarding the appointment of an Independent Person, a Reserve Independent Person and also Independent Co-opted Members of the Standards (Advisory) Committee.

The recommendations set out in the report were put to the vote and were **agreed**. Accordingly it was:

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Council agree:

1. That Ms Hall's term of appointment as Independent Person be increased to five years, as outlined in paragraph 1.3 of the report, to expire on 24 June 2018.
2. The recruitment of a Reserve Independent Person with a report to be presented to Council to confirm their appointment.
3. The recruitment of three new Independent Co-opted Members to the Standards (Advisory) Committee with a report to be presented to Council to confirm their appointment.

## 12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

None of the submitted Motions were debated due to lack of time.

## 13. URGENT MOTIONS

The Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to enable the following urgent motion to be debated without notice:

### **13.1 Motion Regarding the Ian Mikardo school.**

Mayor John Biggs, **moved** and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, the motion as **tabled**.

Councillor Oliur Rahman **moved**, and Councillor Rabina Khan **seconded** a friendly amendment to the motion as set out below:

This Council requests the Executive Mayor to:

1. whilst we recognise that there has been an investigation, there needs to be a public enquiry taking into consideration the feelings and experiences of parents and members of the local community as to how they feel and to learn lessons from this episode.
2. prepare a statement explaining that schools are responsible for appointing their own staff and that the Council and police will always work to protect ethnic minority and other relevant communities from hate crimes, and circulate this widely to local residents. The statement should acknowledge that parents have right to be assured that staff at the school which their children attend are appointed in a proper manner. This statement should be publicised fully using all communication channels.
3. to write to all school governors in the borough pointing out the sensitivity which should be exercised when considering appointing people convicted of serious offences, and especially those with a racist element, and to ensure that this need is communicated to all new LEA governors when they are appointed in the future, and a report provided to the relevant committee of the Council for information and any appropriate legal and professional input.
4. to write to all schools in the borough to advise them of this resolution.
5. to follow the example of the late Jo Cox MP, who said that her multi-ethnic community had more in common than it had division, by promoting community harmony in Tower Hamlets and having no truck with any actions which would cause distress and promote disharmony.

Mayor John Biggs indicated that he accepted paragraphs 2-5 of the amendment and altered the substantial motion accordingly.

Following debate, the motion as amended was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

## **RESOLVED**

This council notes:

- Three individual motions were tabled at the Council meeting related to the appointment of an individual at Ian Mikardo school.
- The Mayor has made a full statement to Council and published a detailed report setting out the findings of the investigation carried out by officers in to the appointment and the role the council played.
- That the appointment of the individual in question by Ian Mikardo school was a matter for the school.
- That representatives of different political groups on the Council have expressed their personal views about the appointment, including the

Mayor who has stated that had the decision been down to him, he would not have approved the appointment.

- That Ian Mikardo School has been judged as excellent, provides a vital service to some of our most vulnerable youngsters, and its transformation has happened under its current head teacher.
- The council currently has no legal power to object to school appointments on community cohesion grounds.

This Council believes:

- That the events of 2001 remain raw, and that our thoughts should be with the family of Shibli Rahman who have inevitably found the renewed attention on his the murder distressing.
- That the fear of racial violence, and the scars of experience, while clearly events have moved on and confidence has grown, remain real for members of our BME communities.
- That we strongly believe in rehabilitation but that this does not reduce the feelings of pain in victims of crime. For this to happen there needs to be a far more comprehensive process of reconciliation. The Council cannot do this on behalf of others but we can and should strongly signal the importance of bridge building through steps such as outreach, confidence building and restorative justice.
- That councillors and the Mayor in particular should offer leadership on issues of public interest and concern.
- That the leadership team and governors at Ian Mikardo should take account of the understandable community concern this information has caused and continue its dialogue with local residents, parents and staff to resolve the concerns. We welcome the moves towards greater outreach and communications from the school.
- That there is no justification for vandalism and damage to school buildings and that such actions serve no purpose and should be wholly condemned.

This council resolves:

To welcome and endorse the Mayor's actions tightening up the rules around controversial school appointments by requiring , where a DBS check for a maintained school appointment returns a serious conviction, the Corporate Director of Children's Services, after consultation with the relevant Lead Member or the Mayor, where necessary, to express the clear view of the authority on the appointment, including the impact on community cohesion. To reaffirm that we will always be intolerant towards racism and racial violence and that Tower Hamlets is no Place for Hate.

This Council requests the Executive Mayor to:

- prepare a statement explaining that schools are responsible for appointing their own staff and that the Council and police will always work to protect ethnic minority and other relevant communities from hate crimes, and circulate this widely to local residents. The statement

should acknowledge that parents have right to be assured that staff at the school which their children attend are appointed in a proper manner. This statement should be publicised fully using all communication channels.

- to write to all school governors in the borough pointing out the sensitivity which should be exercised when considering appointing people convicted of serious offences, and especially those with a racist element, and to ensure that this need is communicated to all new LEA governors when they are appointed in the future, and a report provided to the relevant committee of the Council for information and any appropriate legal and professional input.
- to write to all schools in the borough to advise them of this resolution.
- to follow the example of the late Jo Cox MP, who said that her multi-ethnic community had more in common than it had division, by promoting community harmony in Tower Hamlets and having no truck with any actions which would cause distress and promote disharmony.

The meeting ended at 10.20 p.m.

Speaker of the Council