

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Council</b>  18 January 2017	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Graham White, Acting Corporate Director, Governance	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Questions submitted by Members of the Council</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, 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 at the Council meeting on Wednesday 18 January 2017
2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2 as amended, 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 12.5 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**

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

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

Will the Mayor confirm that, contrary to some opposition scaremongering, he will not be recommending removing the 100% Council Tax Reduction Scheme support unlike many other boroughs?

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

What is the current mayor's view about the information that Government has only admitted about 13% of the vulnerable Syrian refugees and children, of the total of 20,000 agreed by the Parliament? Also, how many families have been accommodated by Tower Hamlets so far?

### **8.3 Question from Councillor Andrew Cregan**

Smarter Streets is being trialled in three wards - Bromley North, Island Gardens and Stepney Green – and enables residents to very easily report litter and fly-tipping using their smart phones. Are there any early indications about the success of the trial scheme?

### **8.4 Question from Councillor Julia Dockerill**

Is the Mayor aware that when neighbouring Newham Council sought to set up a new free school without a proper, open competition, it ended up costing three council officers their jobs after they effectively broke the law?

What assurances can the Mayor provide councillors that Tower Hamlets will be running an open, fair and compliant tendering process for the London Dock and Westferry free school sites?

### **8.5 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin**

The Tower Hamlets Education Partnership launched in late September this year. What work has been undertaken by the Partnership since the formal launch – and what is planned for the near future?

### **8.6 Question from Councillor Abdul Asad**

Could the Mayor provide an update on what actions have been taken to keep Old Ford Housing a locally based Housing Provider as agreed in the original transfer documents?

### **8.7 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell**

Can the Mayor or portfolio holder provide an update on plans to bring Old Flo back to the borough?

### **8.8 Question from Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Does the Mayor believe that dealing with the drugs and drug-related crimes in Tower Hamlets - which links to vicious cycle of poverty, lack of social mobility, abuse, dependence, self-harm - is one of his priorities?

### **8.9 Question from Councillor Amina Ali**

Shelter estimated that over the Christmas period, 120,000 children were homeless. This figure is up two-thirds since 2010. What action is the Council taking to house homeless families?

### **8.10 Question from Councillor Peter Golds**

Concerns have been raised by residents of Manchester Road as to vibration from traffic which is causing serious problems to residential housing. Thames Water recently completed repairs to Manchester Road at the Manchester Grove intersection; however the road surface was left uneven on completion.

Thames Water say the repair was signed off by Tower Hamlets Council. The uneven surface is now causing vibration issues in an area with many known water breaks and is affecting nearby houses. In this situation who takes responsibility, Thames Water or Tower Hamlets Council for signing off the completed road repair?

### **8.11 Question from Councillor John Pierce**

Can the Cabinet Member assess the effectiveness of the Whitechapel Public Spaces Prevention Order, which was brought in to tackle anti-social behaviour around the pedestrian footpath connecting Old Montague Street and Whitechapel Road?

### **8.12 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan**

Could the Mayor confirm if any of Tower Hamlets Children's Centres have failed OFSTED Inspections?

### **8.13 Question from Councillor Candida Ronald**

What impact will the new school funding formula have on children in Tower Hamlets?

### **8.14 Question from Councillor Mahbub Alam**

Can the Mayor please list the specific activities and tasks that each of the appointed Mayoral Advisers have carried out in line with their job description which were agreed by the Council?

### **8.15 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed**

Can the Cabinet Member inform me what activities were held as part of the 'White Ribbon' campaign, aimed at tackling violence against women and girls?

### **8.16 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman**

Will the Mayor update the Council as to what steps he and the local police service are undertaking to limit and investigate incidents of homophobia?

### **8.17 Question from Councillor Shah Alam**

Can the Mayor provide an update on his pledge that he would hold Poplar Harca to account for its 600% increase in parking charges to residents?

### **8.18 Question from Councillor Muhammad Mustaquim**

How much revenue has the Council generated from individuals and companies that undertake commercial filming, media related activities or photoshoots in the borough, for each year since 2011?

### **8.19 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood**

Will the Mayor inform the Council as to whether his administration applied for funding for new on-street residential chargepoints for plug-in electric vehicles which is available from the Department of Transport?

### **8.20 Question from Councilor Shafi Ahmed**

Does the Mayor think that there has been an increase of ASB in the last 2 years and does he think that crime is at its lowest?

### **8.21 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani**

Is the Mayor planning to go ahead with his proposal to cut the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for thousands of the borough's poorest and most vulnerable residents as the costs incurred in chasing debts – bailiff's letters and visits, court fees and council administrative costs – vastly outweigh the sums owed by impoverished families. Will the Mayor undertake to stop this proposed cut as part of his budget?

### **8.22 Question from Councillor Craig Aston**

Recommendation 50 of the December Cabinet Office Report "A Democracy that works for everybody: A clear and secure Democracy," indicates that the Government will be undertaking a review of how democratic checks and balances can be increased in local government structures where power is concentrated. The report goes on to say "that this clearly flows from the issues identified in Tower Hamlets ..which serves as a warning as to how impropriety in the process of an election can lead to issues where those elected take positions of responsibility." The Government agrees that "such governance must include effective processes that openly and transparently hold those exercising executive responsibilities to account, and which prevent, discourage, and expose municipal corruption."

Will the Mayor update the Council as to when the Constitutional Working Group will consider these recommendations and will he ensure that they are implemented during the course of the current administration?

### **8.23 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan**

What is the amount of debt owed to the council in the last 12 months that has been written off?

### **8.24 Question from Councilor Maium Miah**

How much money does the Council generate per annum from properties or assets that are leased, rented or for which any kind of payment is received by the authority? What was the average percentage in the rent, lease, rates or any other amount received or claimed by the Council, for 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 and planned for 2017/20 budget?

I'd be grateful if you could provide simple key headline figures in a table rather than referring to webpages or excel sheets. Thank you.

### **8.25 Question from Councillor Harun Miah**

Since June 2015, can the current Mayor provide of the list of the following information:

How many people have been moved to areas, towns and cities, outside of Tower Hamlets?

Where have they been moved to?

How many people were placed in temporary accommodation?

How many of the above are under the age of 16?

### **8.26 Question from Councilor Suluk Ahmed**

Can the Mayor inform the members and residents how many requests have been received by the council as a result of its new 'Clear Up Project'?

Can a clear and concise procedure and protocol document be given to all persons and organisations that have reported any requests or against whom/which any reports or allegations have been made so that they are fully aware of how their request shall be dealt with.

In the interest of transparency, can a copy of these documents be provided to councillors please, and be published on the council's internal and website.

Can the Mayor confirm how this process can now assure complete independence from political or senior management influences, bearing in mind they are the investigators' paymasters?

### **8.27 Question from Councilor Gulam Kibria Choudhury**

Can the Cabinet Member, Cllr David Edgar, provide the simple headline monetary figures of the list of asset above sold by the Council between 1998 and the current date, with a simple total headline amount for each year. I'd be most grateful if the specific information requested can be given in a simple table rather than being referred to webpages or excel sheets. Thank you.