

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2009

**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Lutfa Begum, Ahmed Hussain, Ann Jackson, Mohammed Abdul Munim and Oliur Rahman and for lateness from Councillor Tim O'Flaherty.

DECISION

That the apologies for absence and lateness be noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Please see minutes.

3. MINUTES

DECISION

That subject to an amendment to record Councillor Dr. Anwara Ali's declaration of a personal interest in agenda item 7.8, the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17th December 2008 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and the Mayor be authorised to sign them accordingly.

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Please see minutes.

5. TO RECEIVE ANY DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS

DEPUTATIONS

5.1.1 Deputation re: the effect of the economic downturn on residents

Ms. Claire Palmer addressed the meeting in support of the deputation.

DECISION

That the deputation be referred to the Corporate Director of Resources for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Chris Naylor, Corporate Director of Resources)

5.1.2 Deputation re: living standards on the Exmouth Estate

Mr. Dave Coker addressed the meeting in support of the deputation.

DECISION

That the deputation be referred to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Paul Evans, Interim Corporate Director, Development and Renewal)

5.1.3 Deputation re: Latham House

Mr Aleyk Miah addressed the meeting in support of the deputation.

DECISION

That the deputation be referred to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Paul Evans, Interim Corporate Director, Development and Renewal)

PETITIONS

5.2.1 Petition re: Tesco Express Supermarket on Bow Road

Petition not heard as no representative of the petitioners was in attendance.

5.2.2 Petition re: Island Homes

Mr Terence Austin and Jenny Fisher addressed the meeting in support of the petition.

DECISION

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Paul Evans, Interim Corporate Director, Development and Renewal)

5.2.3 Petition re: anti-social behaviour on the Devons Road Estate

Mr. Tazul Islam addressed the meeting in support of the petition.

DECISION

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 6.1** Question from Mr. Philip Whittington to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Joshua Peck re: payment of Council tax

The above question and an oral supplementary question were put by Mr. Whittington and responded to by the Lead Member, Resources and Performance.

(Action by: Chris Naylor, Corporate Director of Resources)

- 6.2** Question from Ms. Johanna Kaschke to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Joshua Peck re: non-payment reminders

This question was not put at the meeting as Ms Kaschke was not present. Written response to be sent.

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

- 6.3** Question from Mr. Len Aldis to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman re: Mayors for Peace

The above question and an oral supplementary question were put by Mr. Aldis and responded to by the Leader of the Council.

(Action by: Lutfur Ali, Assistant Chief Executive)

- 6.4** Question from Mr. Terry McGrenera to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Joshua Peck re: the London Living Wage

The above question and an oral supplementary question were put by Mr. McGrenera and responded to by the Lead Member for Resources and Performance.

(Action by: Chris Naylor, Corporate Director of Resources)

7. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

- 7.1** Question from Councillor Fazlul Haque to the Lead Member for Employment and Skills, Councillor Alibor Choudhury re: work to improve jobs and skills in the community.
- 7.2** Question from Councillor Shirley Houghton to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Sirjaul Islam re: Members training.
- 7.3** Question from Councillor Harun Miah to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Joshua Peck re: Council Tax and charges.
- 7.4** Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah re: Safer Neighbourhood Teams.
- 7.6** Question from Councillor Tim Archer to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Ohid Ahmed re: Blackwall Reach and Robin Hood Gardens.

The above questions and oral supplementary questions where put, were responded to by the relevant Lead Members.

Question 7.5 was not put as Councillor Ann Jackson was not present at the meeting.

Due to the lack of time, questions 7 – 24 were not put. Written responses will be forwarded to the questioners.

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

8. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

8.1 Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2007/08

Mr Barry O'Connor, Independent Chair of the Standards Committee, presented the Committee's annual report and responded to questions from Members.

DECISION

That the Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2007/08 be received.

(Action by: Isabella Freeman, Assistant Chief Executive [Legal Services and Standards])

9. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

9.1 Joint Arrangements

There was no business under this heading to be considered.

9.2 External Organisations

There was no business under this heading to be considered.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no business under this heading to be considered.

11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

11.1 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding support for the Palestinians in Gaza

The motion as printed in the agenda was moved by Councillor Abjol Miah and seconded by Councillor Harun Miah.

An amendment moved by Councillor Lutfur Rahman and seconded by Councillor Ohid Ahmed was **agreed**.

The substantive motion as amended was then **agreed** as follows:

DECISION

This Council notes:

That during the recent Israeli offensive against Gaza, more than 1300 Palestinians have been killed.

That over 400 of these are children and over 100 women.

That over 5500 people have been injured sufficiently seriously to be admitted to hospital.

That three Israeli civilians and 13 Israeli soldiers have been killed.

That many civilians on both sides have died since the breakdown of the peace process in 2000. (727 Israeli civilians and 2200 Palestinian civilians from 2000-2007 according to Israeli Human Rights Group B'Tselem as cited by OCHA).

That combined with the long-standing blockade of the Gaza Strip, the current hostilities have precipitated a massive humanitarian crisis.

That Israel ignored a UN call to ceasefire for over a week until its aims had been achieved.

That both sides have concluded separate ceasefires but that the underlying problems remain unresolved.

This Council believes:

That military action resulting in the death of civilians, whether as a result of deliberate targeting or “collateral damage” is incompatible with the values of a liberal democracy.

That Israel has used disproportionate and insufficiently discriminating force in the Gaza Strip.

That Israeli tactics, combined with the long-standing blockade of the Gaza Strip amount to the collective punishment of an entire population, in contravention of the Geneva Convention.

That Israeli aggression is unlikely to achieve its stated aims preventing rocket attacks and has demonstrably led to a rise in anti-Israeli sentiment across the world.

This Council resolves:

To condemn this Israeli incursion into Gaza

To call on the British Government to express that condemnation unequivocally and ask Ministers to:

- Condemn Israel’s use of disproportionate and insufficiently discriminating military force
- Call on our government to pressure Israel to halt settlement on Palestinian land
- Call on each side to renounce violence and negotiate a settlement for a secure Israel and an economically and politically viable Palestinian state based on 1967 borders
- Consider sanctions against Israel if it refuses to engage in negotiation, just as the US and others have lent support to the de facto sanctions applied on Gaza and Hamas in the form of the Israeli blockade
- Write to the BBC and Sky TV condemning their refusal to air a DEC appeal for aid on behalf of the people of Gaza
- Halt arms exports.

To condemn rocket attacks by Hamas on civilian targets in Israel.

To condemn anti-Semitic attacks, graffiti and abuse within Tower Hamlets or anywhere else.

To support people in Gaza by exploring possibilities for friendship with organisations in the region who are committed to a just and lasting peace and encouraging local businesses to stock fair trade Palestinian products.

To ask youth workers and the Humanities Education Centre to engage with young people on the human rights issues at the heart of the Middle East conflict.

Motions 11.2 – 11.12 as listed below were not considered due to lack of time, the meeting having closed in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Duration of meeting).

- 11.2 Motion submitted by Councillor Tim Archer regarding waste incentives and bin taxes**
- 11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Salim Ullah regarding condemning homophobia and prejudice**
- 11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding eliminating excessive punishment for minor parking offences**
- 11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding freezing charges and taxes and maintaining services**
- 11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Peter Golds regarding the future of homeowners and the local economy in Tower Hamlets**
- 11.7 Motion submitted by Councillor Alex Heslop regarding support for the co-operative and social enterprise sector**
- 11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding boosting Council Housing**
- 11.9 Motion submitted by Councillor Lutfur Rahman regarding the Sustainable Communities Act**
- 11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding support for Lifelong Learning**
- 11.11 Motion submitted by Councillor Md. Mamun Rashid regarding the plight of Latham House**
- 11.12 Motion submitted by Councillor Md. Abdul Munim regarding 'parking tyranny'**

The meeting ended at 10.46 p.m