

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2008**

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 11**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD,  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**SUMMARY**

1. Twelve motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for the Council meeting on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008.
2. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008, the order in which the motions are listed is by turns, one from each group, continuing in rotation until all motions submitted are included. The rotation starts with any group(s) not reached at the previous meeting.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months unless notice of motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

**MOTIONS**

Set out overleaf are the motions that have been submitted.

## 11.1 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding parking

**Proposed: Councillor Abjol Miah**

**Seconded: Councillor Harun Miah**

1) This Council notes:

a) that the council received almost £5 million from motorists in Penalty Charge Notices and tow aways for the tax year 2007/2008;

b) that for many families car use is essential both for their transport and for the acquisition of vital provisions including the bulk-buying of foodstuffs;

c) that residents parking permit charging is discriminating against large family car owners;

d) that car ownership in the borough remains relatively low;

e) that so-called "parking free" new developments particularly discriminate against those dependent for their transport on car use;

f) that there is very widespread anger over the application of parking enforcement rules in an unreasonable way, causing huge and unaffordable cost particularly to those less well-off;

g) that many people believe that the parking enforcement policy has little to do with reasonable parking and traffic control and everything to do with raising money for the Council through a regressive stealth tax on car owners; and

h) that parking policy is inhibiting visitors to the borough using the markets of Tower Hamlets and therefore adversely affecting business in the borough

2) This Council calls on the Cabinet to carry out an urgent and thorough review of parking policy which will:

a) introduce some common sense and flexibility into parking enforcement so that it is no longer ticket and tow away first, ask questions after;

b) review parking permit charges so that they do not discriminate against large family car owners, whilst at the same time they do reflect pro-economy, anti-gas guzzling car ownership;

c) review parking access to the principal markets in Tower Hamlets and seek to make more parking available during the hours of those markets; and

d) seek to get changes in Government policy so that Section 106 restrictions on parking permissions around new developments no longer discriminate against those dependent on car use.

## **11.2 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding community cohesion and ID Cards**

**Proposed: Councillor Stephanie Eaton**

**Seconded: Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan**

This Council notes:

1. That Parliament has created identity card legislation.
2. This legislation will have an impact on all residents within Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

1. That the proposed scheme will impose substantial and disproportionate costs on the Council.
2. That the cost of ID cards would be better spent on employing crime prevention measures such as more police officers, and target hardening.
3. ID cards have the potential to have a negative impact on social cohesion and notes the concerns of the Metropolitan Police Service to that effect:

*'The scheme could become compulsory prematurely for those disadvantaged members of society, because they would have to have an ID Card in order to access Social Security Benefits, etc. It should also be noted that many of the visible ethnic minorities are over-represented in this socio-economically deprived group. We have severe reservations that the scheme could add to tensions at a time when the police service is investing greatly in gaining confidence across all communities'.*

This Council will:

1. Make it a policy of the Council to ensure that national identity cards would not be required to access council services or benefits unless specifically required to do so by Act of Parliament.
2. Take no part in any pilot scheme or feasibility work in relation to the introduction of the national identity cards.
3. Only co-operate with the national identity card scheme where to do otherwise would be unlawful.
4. Affiliate to the NO2ID campaign whose supporters already include MPs and Peers of all parties, Borough, County and District Councils, and unions (including UNISON, the largest union in the UK with 1.3 million members).

### **11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Clair Hawkins regarding ending child poverty in Tower Hamlets**

**Proposed: Councillor Clair Hawkins**

**Seconded: Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

This Council notes:

- That research by the End Child Poverty campaign shows that there are 42,000 children living in poverty in Tower Hamlets;
- That child poverty doubled during 18 years of Tory misrule from 1979 to 1997;
- The historic commitment by the Labour Government to halve Child Poverty by 2010 and the fact that the goal of ending child poverty by 2020 was enshrined in law in the Queen's Speech this month;
- The raft of measures announced in November's pre-budget report that will help to lessen the burden on the most vulnerable people in society as the recession takes hold;
- Regret at the failure of the Conservative Party to support many legislative measures that are necessary to end child poverty by 2020;
- That the End Child Poverty campaign has praised Tower Hamlets achievements in education;
- The Council's commitment and actions to date to address child poverty have been recognised by being short-listed for a Beacon award for Preventing and Tackling Child Poverty;
- Reducing Child Poverty is a priority in the Tower Hamlets Local Area Agreement with suitably challenging and ambitious targets; and
- That the causes of child poverty are many and complex and that eradicating child poverty will require strong partnership working with central government, the Mayor of London, the third sector and other partners.

This Council believes:

- That preventing and tackling child poverty must continue to be a Council priority;
- That this Council continues to support the ongoing work to develop an integrated child poverty strategy;
- That eradicating child poverty will only be achieved through multi-agency partnership working;

- That the current Scrutiny review into child poverty will inform the work around our strategy; and
- That Child Poverty must be a theme that runs through the new three year Children and Young People's Plan

This Council resolves:

- To sign up to and deliver on the London Child Poverty Pledge
- To accelerate the development of its Child Poverty Strategy to prevent and tackle child poverty with key partners working to address four priority areas:
  - (i) removing barriers to work which includes offering parents childcare options that allow them to go to work, and also supporting them in their search for employment;
  - (ii) developing pathways to work, through investment in long term training options in the basic skills that lead to employment;
  - (iii) breaking the cycle of poverty, which includes the council's continued focus on improving education, improving careers advice and guidance and preventing young people from becoming NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training); and
  - (iv) mitigating the effects of poverty, including making sure local young people have access to cultural, leisure and sporting activities and developing extended services.

#### **11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Ahmed Hussain regarding the future of homeowners and the local economy in Tower Hamlets**

**Proposed: Councillor Ahmed Hussain**  
**Seconded: Councillor Tim Archer**

This Council notes:

The current credit crunch that has hit the country has left the residents of this borough in a very vulnerable financial position that could well have grave consequences for hard pressed families. The government has predicted that there will be more job losses and property repossessions before the economy gets any better and this is bound to hit an area like Tower Hamlets harder than more affluent parts of the country. It is an unfortunate consequence of this that the children of this borough, who already live in higher than average poverty, will be harder hit.

The presence of Canary Wharf and the subsequent presence of a large number of financial institutions is an added dimension that most parts of the country will not

have to deal with. Many of the workers on the Canary Wharf estate are residents of Tower Hamlets and any slow down in the economic growth of this key area will affect all sections of our community. This council should be committed to ensuring all our residents are not affected by this crisis and therefore:

The Council notes:

- That at least 25% of the boroughs homeowners will be effected by this down turn and may face repossessions of their homes this year alone;
- That the residents of Tower Hamlets should be protected as far as is possible from the worst affects of this economic downturn;
- That many of the poorest families in this Borough will be affected to a proportionally greater degree then residents of other London Boroughs; and
- That the council's elected Members and officers have the duty to ensure that the electorate are safeguarded and financially helped within the limit of the resources available to the authority.

This Council believes:

- That it exists to help and assist the residents of Tower Hamlets in all aspects of their lives;
- That it understand the financial stability and well being of its residents are key in creating a prosperous and just society; and
- That in order to safeguard and help the residents of Tower Hamlets it would intervene as and when necessary to provide assistance for hard pressed families.

This Council calls on those responsible to ensure:

- All services provided by the Council take into account the worsening financial situation of our residents;
- That Children's Services does all that it can to ensure children are protected from the worst aspects of this situation;
- That the current Council Tax will be capped at its current rate for the fiscal year 2009/10 and 2010/11;
- That the service charges will be capped to the current rate for the fiscal year 2009/10 and 2010/11;
- That the council will influence all the RSL's to cap their service charges; and
- That the Council call on the Government to clarify their latest mortgage assistance proposals so that as many of our residents can benefit as possible.

## **11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding pensioners**

**Proposed: Councillor Dulal Uddin**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This council notes:

- a) the recent Age Concern assessment of the pre-Budget report;
- b) that pensioner poverty grew from 1.8 million to 2.1 million in the financial year 2006-2007 and is very likely to have seriously worsened since then;
- c) that this some £5 billion annually of tax credits and benefits to pensioners are going unclaimed with 1.8 million pensioners failing to claim tax credit;
- d) that 5.4 million households are now living in fuel poverty;
- e) the number of pensioners in fuel poverty has doubled to 2.75 million households since 2004;
- f) that when the Winter Fuel Payment was introduced it covered more than one third of fuel costs but now covers less than one fifth;
- g) that one in ten of the poorest pensioners are being forced into debt by the rising cost of living for pensioners;
- h) that many of our poorest people and pensioners in particularly are being penalised by higher pay as you use charges;
- j) that two thirds of pensioners are now cutting back on fuel use to heat their homes;
- k) that Britain has the worst rate of cold-related deaths in the whole of Europe; and
- l) that Tower Hamlets has many pensioners who are extremely vulnerable for these reasons over the next few months, particularly as a severe winter is forecast.

2) This Council believes:

- a) that urgent action must be taken by the Government to address the problems of pensioner poverty and the related problems of fuel poverty;
- b) that this Council must take whatever action is available to it to identify and assist pensioners in Tower Hamlets facing poverty and fuel poverty; and
- c) that this reinforces the urgent necessity for the Government to bring forward investment plans to refurbish social and council housing in the

borough which needs proper heat insulation and more economical heating systems.

3) This Council calls on the Cabinet and Council officers to address the problem of pensioner poverty as a matter of extreme urgency and to use East End Life and other newspapers and publicity outlets in Tower Hamlets, including writing to all pensioners, to alert them to the tax credits and other benefits and assistance that they may not be aware of and may not be accessing.

## **11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Lutfur Rahman regarding the London Living Wage**

**Proposed: Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

**Seconded: Councillor Carli Harper-Penman**

This Council:

- supports the establishment of the London Living Wage, set at a level calculated by the Living Wage Unit to avoid poverty wages being paid in the capital;
- abhors the fact that around 400,000 Londoners continue to fall into a 'working poverty trap' because their families are paid less than required to fund the basic costs of living in London;
- calls on the Leader to review Tower Hamlets Council's procurement, contract and best value policies to ensure that, as far as possible within UK and EU law, the London Living Wage, at the level set by the GLA's Living Wage Unit, is the minimum paid by Tower Hamlets Council and by its contractors and that all temporary workers employed by the council are paid at least £7.45 an hour by their agency;
- calls on the Leader to seek commitments from Tower Hamlets' partners in the Local Strategic Partnership to pay no less than the London Living Wage; and
- calls on the Leader to ensure that the Council's commitment to the London Living Wage is clearly displayed on Council headed paper, the Council website and other appropriate locations.



## **11.7 Motion submitted by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding the Olympics**

**Proposed: Councillor Fozol Miah**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This Council notes with alarm:

a) that a 250-page government report, The Game Plan, published secretly in 2002 and signed off by none other than Tony Blair, and which has only just now come to light, found little evidence that the Olympics would produce any economic benefit or encourage more people to participate in sport;

b) that UK Sport has a £79 million funding shortfall in its £300 million budget as a result of lack of sponsors because of the credit crunch;

c) that the costs of the Olympics originally estimated to be £2.4 billion has ballooned over a very short time to be now estimated at £9.3 billion;

d) that nearly £550 million has been diverted to the Olympics from grassroots sports organisations and that this is now very adversely affecting grassroots sports organisations in Tower Hamlets;

e) that the National Campaign for the Arts estimates a loss of £300 million through the diversion of lottery funds to the Olympics; and

f) that funding for Olympics sports prior to the Olympics is being based on previous success rather than potential.

2) This Council believes there has to be an urgent review of the whole Olympics strategy which will include:

a) how to restore funding to grassroots sports currently being starved of lottery funding;

b) how to cut the costs of the Olympics to the London and Tower Hamlets taxpayer, given the lack of likely economic and sporting benefits long-term from the Olympics; and

c) how to convert what has been in the past an Olympics for the corporate sponsors into a people's Olympics in which there will both be planning gain in the provision of homes and sporting facilities, particularly for those less well-off in East London and promotion of grassroots participative sports.

## **11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Alex Heslop regarding support for the co-operative and social enterprise sector**

**Proposed: Councillor Alex Heslop**

**Seconded: Councillor Denise Jones**

This Council recognises that there is a diverse and healthy co-operative sector in Tower Hamlets with a combined turnover of approximately £50 million and also appreciates the important role that co-operatives and other social enterprises can play in community and economic regeneration initiatives. Although there are many successful co-operative enterprises operating in Tower Hamlets such as Tower Hamlets Community Credit Union, Tower Hamlets CDA and Greenwich Leisure (effectively a workers co-op), as well as several food co-ops and housing co-operatives, there is not a single Council officer with a specific remit or indeed expertise for working with the co-operative & social enterprise sectors.

This Council resolves to do the following:

- Allocate responsibility for supporting the co-operative & social enterprise sectors to the Lead Member for Regeneration as well as a designated Council officer who will promote and support new mutual models for the provision of community services, including housing, pre-school childcare, residential and home care, recycling and leisure. Made possible through service reviews, externalising, or re-contracting services and procurement procedures.
- Organise an annual event to celebrate International Co-operatives Day in partnership with the local Co-operative Movement; this could also involve the Tower Hamlets Partnership and its Creating and Sharing Prosperity Community Plan Action Group.
- Develop procurement strategies that make a direct link between the Community Plan and other strategic objectives and contract specifications ensuring that community benefits can be fully integrated into the procurement process.
- Work with the Co-operative Sector and London Development Agency to improve access to finance and support for socially and mutually owned businesses.
- Work with staff and unions on a partnership basis in the creation of new cooperative services

## **11.9 Motion submitted by Councillor Mohammed Abdul Munim regarding postal votes**

**Proposed: Councillor Mohammed Abdul Munim**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This Council notes:

a) the postal vote on demand system has been subject to very serious fraud since its introduction;

b) that both Labour and Tory councillors have been convicted of election fraud using postal votes on demand over the last three years;

c) that, despite attempts by the government to tighten up the system, the current system was condemned by Judge Richard Mawrey QC as “lethal to the democratic process” as recently as March 2008;

d) that the Electoral Commission and Unlock Democracy amongst others have called for individual voter registration to combat postal vote fraud;

e) that individual voter registration will not address the fundamental flaw in the postal vote on demand system which is that it effectively abolishes the secrecy of the ballot established in 1872;

f) that the postal vote on demand system particularly affects women voters who may be intimidated into voting for candidates and parties they don't wish to vote for;

g) that there is no evidence that the postal vote on demand system has raised the overall level of turnout in local or parliamentary elections and that issues of access to voting can be addressed by extending the hours of voting, spreading voting over two days and/or having balloting take place at weekends;

h) that abolishing postal votes on demand would not affect the continued access to postal votes for those too unwell or unable for reasons of location to vote in person at a polling station;

j) that the leaders of all four major parties, Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Respect on Birmingham City Council, the largest local authority in the country, have signed a letter to Gordon Brown calling for the postal vote on demand system to be abolished; and

k) that the leaders of three of the four parties, the Respect, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, represented on Tower Hamlets Council have agreed to support the call for an end to postal votes on demand.

2) This Council deplores:

a) the continued role that the postal vote on demand system plays in determining the outcome of elections in Tower Hamlets;

b) the fact the Leader of Tower Hamlets Council has refused to support the call for an end to the postal vote on demand system;

3) This Council believes the integrity of the electoral system will not be restored unless and until the postal vote on demand system is abolished.

4) This Council calls on the Government to abolish the postal vote on demand system at the earliest opportunity.

### **11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Salim Ullah condemning homophobia and prejudice**

**Proposed: Councillor Salim Ullah**

**Seconded: Councillor Sirajul Islam**

This Council:

- Condemns the recent attack on a man in Shoreditch, which the police are treating as homophobic;
- Recognises that homophobia is a major issue in Tower Hamlets, as in the rest of London and the UK;
- Recognises that other prejudices and hatred can lead to violence and intimidation;
- Restates its opposition to prejudice, and its commitment to campaigning for equality, specifically to campaigning for equality for groups that often suffer discrimination, such as women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and
- Supports legislation passed by the Labour government prohibiting religious hatred, and continues to assert the importance of respecting the beliefs of those of all faiths and none.

This Council resolves to:

- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to all forms of hate crime;
- Encourage the Local MPs and GLA member to work with the Council to compile information on crimes that relate to prejudice and discrimination, such as:

- a) hate crimes that relate to all equality strands including age - violence, name calling, insults, threats of attack and other hate crimes; and
  - b) other crimes that relate to discrimination and inequality, such as domestic violence;
- Encourage the Local MPs and GLA member to work with the Council to gather information on evidence of discrimination that does not relate to crime, such as pay gaps promulgated by local employers, or evidence of harassment, name calling or other such incidents that may not be reported to the police but are still important in understanding issues around discrimination and prejudice;
  - Ensure that all Council funded bodies uphold the values of tolerance and mutual respect amongst our whole community, including respecting different values and ways of life;
  - Review work going on locally that addresses discrimination and community cohesion, and to use the public sector equality duties to ensure that all public bodies are fully delivering on their obligations and help these organisations to develop and implement equality policies if they have not already done so; and
  - Campaign to raise awareness of the issue of hate crime, in particular homophobic hate crime.

#### **11.11 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding Council Tax and services**

**Proposed: Councillor Harun Miah**  
**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

##### 1) This Council notes:

- a) the extremely severe recession we are now facing;
- b) that Tower Hamlets is likely to be particularly badly affected because of the meltdown in jobs in the financial sector;
- c) that there will be an increased demand for vital Council services during the recession.

##### 2) This Council believes:

- a) that it would be entirely wrong to raise Council Tax, Council rents and service charges during the recession;
- b) that it would be entirely wrong to cut services during the recession;
- c) that it would be entirely wrong to cut jobs during the recession;

d) that it would be entirely wrong to cut in real terms the salaries of Council staff during the recession; and

e) that any shortfall in income against expenditure resulting from freezing or lowering Council taxes and other charges, increasing services and maintaining the employment and living standards of Council employees should be made up by increased Government grant.

3) This Council calls on the Government to increase the grant to local government in line with the above.

### **11.12 Motion submitted by Councillor Mamun Rashid regarding police representation**

**Proposed: Councillor Mamun Rashid**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This Council notes:

a) the recent survey by Demos which showed that there are only 0.6% Muslim police officers nationally, against a census 2001 figure for the national population of 3% which has since grown;

b) that Superintendent Dal Babu, a highly respected police officer formerly stationed in Tower Hamlets and a spokesperson for the National Association of Muslim Police, has criticised the fact that there are only 27 out of 2,300 police officers involved in counter-terrorism and few officers at senior level;

c) that there are no Muslim police officers in senior management positions in Tower Hamlets police;

d) that there may be no Muslim police officers over the rank of constable in Tower Hamlets; and

e) that there is widespread concern amongst ethnic minority Police Community Support Officers that they as a group are less likely to be made up to full police officers.

2) This Council believes:

a) that there is still institutional racism within the police, despite efforts post-Macpherson to address these issues;

b) that effective policing, including in the area of counter-terrorism, crucially depends on the communities which are being policed having confidence in the police force;

c) that confidence in the police force is undermined when its make-up is not representative of the community it polices;

d) that the extremely unrepresentative nature of the police here in Tower Hamlets will continue to inhibit confidence in the police and therefore inhibit their effectiveness;

e) that a too rapid turnover of both PCSOs and full police officers in the 17 Safer Neighbourhood Teams inhibits their effectiveness; and

f) that Safer Neighbourhood Teams have to be available to the communities they are policing when people in those communities most need police assistance.

3) This Council calls on the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener and the Leader of the Council to convene an urgent meeting with representatives of the Metropolitan Police Authority and senior management in Tower Hamlets Police to discuss:

a) how to address the problem of the unrepresentative nature of the police in Tower Hamlets;

b) how to secure greater continuity in Safer Neighbourhood Teams; and

c) how to ensure Safer Neighbourhood Teams are available to the communities they police when they are most needed.