

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2009

**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 Monday 9th February 2009.
2. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21st 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 support for the Palestinians in Gaza

Proposed: Councillor Abjol Miah
Seconded: Councillor Harun Miah

This Council deplores

- a) the three week assault on Gaza by Israel which has led to the deaths of more than 1,300 people, many of them women and children;
- b) the New Labour Government's failure to take strong actions against Israel for this assault;
- c) the New Labour Government's decision to send the Royal Navy to assist the Israeli blockade of Gaza; and
- d) the decision by the BBC and Sky not to show the Gaza appeal from the Disaster Emergencies Committee

This Council believes

- a) Israel has committed a number of war crimes during the assault on Gaza; and
- b) the actions of the Israeli Government and the failure of the British Government to take strong measures against Israel could fuel extremist reactions to the Israeli outrages, which in turn might endanger Tower Hamlets residents

This Council demands that the Government:

- a) expels the Israeli ambassador and withdraws the British ambassador in Tel Aviv;
- b) ends arms sales to Israel, currently worth £18 million per year;
- c) recognises Hamas as the democratically elected government of Palestine;
- d) abandons the planned blockade of Gaza by the Royal Navy on behalf of the Israeli Government; and
- e) imposes sanctions on Israel

This Council supports

- a) a boycott of all Israeli products;
- b) a day of support for the Palestinians in Gaza with collections across the borough and in the Council itself;
- c) the aid convoy being organised to travel from London to Gaza through the Viva Palestina organisation led by George Galloway MP; and

- d) an education programme in citizenship classes in our schools to provide factual information on the plight of the people of Palestine and about the distinction between opposing Zionism and anti-Semitism

This Council requests that the Cabinet

- a) asks officers to ensure that the Council does not buy Israeli goods nor have any other links to this rogue regime;
- b) lobbies the Government to permit local authorities to exercise moral, ethical and human rights considerations in the procurement, commissioning or otherwise sourcing of any products, goods or services from countries which continuously flout international laws and UN resolutions;
- c) lobbies the Government to get the European Union to break its ties with Israel which have been strengthened recently and to lift its sanctions on Gaza; and
- d) draws up plans to twin with the town of Jenin in Palestine as a matter of urgency

11.2 Motion submitted by Councillor Tim Archer on waste incentives/bin taxes

Proposed: Councillor Tim Archer
Seconded: Councillor Peter Golds

This Council notes that:

1. The Government is moving ahead with plans to introduce new local bin taxes, through so-called 'waste incentive pilot schemes', which will subsequently be rolled out to two in three homes according to Whitehall estimates;
2. Even the Government's own optimistic Impact Assessment admits that the poorest families will pay £72.31 a year more, and the Treasury has stated the new 'waste incentives' are officially classified as a tax;
3. Bin taxes will lead to a surge in fly-tipping and backyard burning, and in the Republic of Ireland, bin taxes have led to 4 in 10 households now burning their rubbish, and such burning of now causes 73% of all dioxin emissions; and
4. The Government is not properly compensating local authorities for the new burdens imposed through landfill taxes and the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme, increasing pressure on council tax.

This Council resolves to:

1. Oppose Government plans for new bin taxes;

2. Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs rejecting the Government's invitation to participate in these new charges for the collection of household waste; and
3. Call on the Secretary of State to ensure local authorities are properly compensated for new burdens imposed by central government, instead of introducing new taxes.

11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Salim Ullah regarding 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:

- hate crimes that relate to all equality strands including age - violence, name calling, insults, threats of attack and other hate crimes;
- 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.

11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding eliminating excessive punishment for minor parking offences

Proposed: Councillor Stephanie Eaton

Seconded: Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan

This Council notes:

1. That parking controls are necessary to ensure the availability of parking for entitled residents and their visitors, business people, traders and others;
2. That parking management and the promotion of public transport is essential to control traffic flow, avoid climate change and improve air quality; and
3. That many residents value the use of a car, and that vehicle use is often essential for e.g. businesses, families, and to enable people with disabilities to participate in all aspects of community life.

This Council believes:

1. That breaches of parking regulations should be enforced fairly and rigorously;
2. That the fines for breaches of parking regulations are a necessary deterrent to ensure parking space is available to those who need it and are entitled to use it;
3. That where a vehicle is parked dangerously, or in a disabled bay or other area that blocks access for a particular purpose, immediate action to remove a vehicle is necessary and reasonable;
4. That the initial punishment for a breach of a non-serious parking offence (one that attracts a *lower* penalty charge notice) initially should be a penalty charge notice and no other action;

5. That where a lower penalty charge notice has been issued but a vehicle is parked safely, immediate action should *not* be taken to clamp that vehicle or remove that vehicle to the pound;
6. That where a lower penalty charge notice has been issued but the vehicle is parked safely there should be a minimum period of 6 hours between the issue of the penalty charge notice and any clamping of the vehicle or the removal of a vehicle parked safely to enable the owner of that vehicle to remove the vehicle to a location where it is not in breach of any parking regulations; and
7. That where a safely parked vehicle is in breach of a minor parking regulation the rapid removal of the vehicle to the pound and the costs and inconvenience incurred by the owner of the vehicle amounts to disproportionate 'punishment'.

This Council requests that:

1. Officers undertake a review of the parking enforcement policy and engage in consultation with residents with the intention of eliminating cases where a minor breach of a parking regulation (which would attract a penalty charge notice currently £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days) results in a payment by the resident of this £60 fine plus £200 for release of the vehicle from the pound; and
2. Officers provide a report to Cabinet by June 2009 which recommends measures to eliminate disproportionate and excessive 'punishment' in relation to penalties for parking offences.

11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding freezing charges and taxes and maintaining services

Proposed: Councillor Harun Miah

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

This Council notes

- a) the dire warnings coming from City fund managers and others that we are heading not just for a severe recession but a 1930s-style depression;
- b) the failure of the Government's policies so far to get the banks lending again and to arrest the downward spiral of the economy, despite the fact hundreds of billions of pounds of taxpayers money has been thrown at the banks who caused this mess in the first place; and
- c) the failure of the Government to save Woolworths costing a loss of 30,000 jobs and that many other companies have announced redundancies since.

This Council believes

- a) unless drastic action is taken urgently by the Government the gloomiest predictions are more and more likely to become true; and
- b) there should be no rise in taxes at this time on those on middle and low incomes as this will further reduce spending in the economy but that instead middle and low incomes need to be raised.

This Council calls on the Government

- a) to use its de facto nationalisation of the banks to order the banks to start lending at low interest rates;
- b) to bring forward a programme of massive public works, including a council house building programme, to boost the economy as well as benefit those in need;
- c) to take the Bank of England back into public ownership and control and draw up an ambitious programme of further nationalisations to save the economy; and
- d) to move to cut interest rates drastically in the bond markets by the technique of quantitative easing, ie printing money, by ordering the Bank of England to buy government securities

This Council will

- a) make no increase in Council taxes and charges in the forthcoming budget, no cuts in incomes or the size of the workforce; and
- b) request that senior officers seek immediate talks with the Government to secure the necessary grant increases to ensure there is no shortfall in the Council budget as a result of refusing to raise Council taxes and charges and not cutting jobs and wages.

11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Peter Golds regarding the future of homeowners and the local economy in Tower Hamlets

Proposed: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconded: Councillor Ahmed Hussain

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 borough's 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;
- 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;
- 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 RSLs to cap their service charges;
- 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.

11.7 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

11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding boosting Council Housing

Proposed: Councillor Dulal Uddin

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

This Council notes:

- a) residents of Council housing in Tower Hamlets have been conned into transferring to Housing Associations with promises of better services, investment, etc.;
- b) the widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of Housing Associations by the residents of these Housing associations; and
- c) the severe financial difficulties a number of Housing Associations are now in as a result of the economic crisis.

This Council welcomes the decision by the Council to abandon any further attempts to transfer Council housing stock to Housing Associations.

This Council believes there needs to be a crash Council house building programme, not only to address the problems of the 23,000 people on the Council's waiting list, the massive overcrowding in Tower Hamlets and the poor condition of some housing, but also to boost the construction industry which is in meltdown and to boost the economy more generally.

This Council calls on the Government

- a) to bring the Council housing stock that has been transferred to housing associations back into Council ownership; and
- b) to resume the process of direct investment in Council housing, particularly here in Tower Hamlets, where a fraction of the taxpayers money thrown at the banks will resolve much of the housing crisis in Tower Hamlets and beyond

11.9 Motion submitted by Councillor Lutfur Rahman regarding the Sustainable Communities Act

Proposed: Councillor Lutfur Rahman

Seconded: Councillor Sirajul Islam

That Tower Hamlets Council:

- (i) supports the bottom-up process in the Sustainable Communities Act designed to allow local authorities and their communities to drive the help that central government gives in reversing community decline and promoting thriving, sustainable communities;

- (ii) notes that the Act gives local authorities the power to
 - make proposals to government on the action and assistance government must take or give to promote sustainable communities, and that
 - those proposals can be for a transfer of public money and function from central to local control;
- (iii) notes that the Act defines sustainable communities broadly, that definition having the 4 aspects of
 - the improvement of the local economy;
 - protection of the environment;
 - promotion of social inclusion; and
 - participation in civic and political activity;
- (iv) notes that reasons for a local authority choosing to use the Act include gaining new assistance from government, determining that assistance, being able to argue for transfers of public monies from central to local control and involving citizens in democracy; and
- (v) further resolves to
 - inform the local media of this decision; and
 - write to local MPs, informing them of this decision.

11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding support for Lifelong Learning

Proposed: Councillor Fozol Miah

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

This Council supports the Early Day Motion number 533 Alliance for Lifelong Learning introduced by Labour MP Gordon Marsden in the House of Commons, which says:

“That this House welcomes the launch of the Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning (CALL) in September 2008; shares its concern that over 1.4 million places have been lost in the last two years in English adult education due to cuts and fee rises; notes that over 150 organisations are CALL supporters; believes that particularly at this time of recession, affordable access to the life-changing opportunities provided by education is the hallmark of a civilised society; considers that adult learning needs to be simultaneously expanded, resourced and promoted alongside work-based skills training in the Children, Skills and Learning Bill; and calls for immediate action to ensure a full range of learning opportunities for adults to adjust the Personal and Community Development Learning budget to increase with inflation, and redirect any underspend on the Train to Gain programme to meet individual learner demand.”

This Council supports the lobby of parliament called for 25th February by CALL over this issue

This Council believes that the principles being promoted by CALL are very important for the residents of Tower Hamlets and their lifelong learning opportunities and calls on Jim Fitzpatrick MP and George Galloway MP to sign the EDM.

11.11 Motion submitted by Councillor Md. Mamun Rashid regarding the plight of Latham House

Proposed: Councillor Md. Mamun Rashid

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

This Council wishes to express its concern over the continuing uncertainty over the future of Latham House and the limitations on tenancy rights of its residents.

This Council notes the dissatisfaction of the residents of Latham House with the Housing Associations which lease the building and of which they are the tenants

This Council believes that the Council should take Latham House back into Council ownership at the earliest possible opportunity and that the residents of Latham House should also be given secure tenancies at the earliest possible opportunity

This Council also believes the future of Latham House must be resolved at the earliest opportunities to remove the uncertainty currently blighting the lives of its residents

11.12 Motion submitted by Councillor Md. Abdul Munim regarding 'parking tyranny'

Proposed: Councillor Md. Abdul Munim

Seconded: Councillor Abjol 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.