

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>COUNCIL</b>  17 January 2018	
<b>Report of:</b> Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services.
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one Motion submitted by an Opposition Group. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, submission of the Opposition Motion for Debate will alternate in sequence between the opposition groups.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

## MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

## **8 – Opposition Motion by the Independent Group calling for the abandonment of the planned State Visit by Donald Trump**

**Proposer:** Councillor Ohid Ahmed

**Seconded:** Councillor Oliur Rahman

Tower Hamlets is home to one of the country's most diverse communities. The borough has always been a home to migrant communities beginning with the French Huguenots in the 16th Century, followed later by Jewish and Irish migrants. Bangladeshi residents began arriving in the borough during the 1970s. Somalian residents arrived as seamen and then later as a result of a war in Somalia. Tower Hamlets has the highest percentage of Muslim residents in England – 35 per cent compared with the national average of 5 per cent.

Tower Hamlets Council undertakes important and positive community cohesion work through its policies and priorities.

The Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2015 outlined the vision for the borough where people, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The then Strategic Plan 17/18, sets out the council's aim to create more engaged, resilient and cohesive communities. One of the four key themes of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, as part of its priority outcome to create and maintain a vibrant successful place, was to create a Safe and Cohesive Community and, as part of this, the plan highlighted a commitment to promote community cohesion. A cohesive community enables all to have an equal stake and status in the community; where people have the same opportunities as their neighbours; and where people have a commitment and responsibility to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

Like the neighbouring Royal Borough of Greenwich which formally adopted a similar motion, this Council notes with shock and alarm the decision by Donald Trump, President of the United States, to 'retweet' Islamophobic propaganda from the Britain First Twitter account.

The Council further notes with sadness the President's bigoted attitude (Washington Post, Caroline Lucas MP and co-chair of Green Party, Republicans in the United States, Boston Globe, Royal Borough of Greenwich among others) towards women, ethnic minorities and Muslims which has resulted in examples of division and hatred within the USA and beyond.

Mr Trump has been invited to visit the United Kingdom by the Government.

This Council also notes Trump's unilateral decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel which is against the United Nations resolutions, the official policy position of our country and all United Nations permanent member states and an overwhelming majority of nations refused to support this illogical decision. Trump's decision has created a huge impediment to achieving peace, to secure a possible two-state solution between Israel and Palestine and has unnecessarily provided a potential opportunity to be exploited by violent extremists which could have a possible knock-on impact on the efforts to deal with extremism and radicalisation in Tower Hamlets.

The Council further notes Trump's earlier remarks in December 2015 when he first stated 'parts of London were so radicalised that police feared for their lives', and then his decision 'a ban on Muslims travelling to the United States', statements and policies akin to 'Keystone Kops' running around.

For centuries our borough has welcomed people who want to make a better life for themselves or who are fleeing persecution. Our borough is one of the greatest of melting pots and as the centre of London moves towards us, in Tower Hamlets, we understand very well how to foster harmony and cohesion in society while defeating policies and decisions created to sow division and hatred.

The Council notes that Mr Trump needs to understand when the minority fascists calling themselves 'English Defence League (EDL)' tried to march into Tower Hamlets on 7 March 2013, the united local community led by the then leadership came together to stand up to the forces of bigotry and fascism. Similarly, when the East London Mosque was under siege on 12 March 2016, and again on 11 April 2016 by minority fascists calling themselves 'Britain First', it was the local community with a diverse and united population of our great borough, including a local Christian priest, Jewish, Buddhists, Jains, and people of no faith, who all came together to defend the right of their Muslim neighbours to worship peacefully.

The Council notes the positive impact of the work undertaken by the Council under the banner of its 'Community Plan', 'One Tower Hamlets', 'No Place for Hate' and 'Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission' bringing together all community; including faith, communities, community and third sector groups, throughout Tower Hamlets. As such, Council reiterates its commitment to working with residents to further strengthen community cohesion and relations.

The Council notes with regret that this Borough's commitment to maintaining a strong and vibrant community is totally incompatible with the ideology and policies espoused by President Trump and could have a very negative impact upon the positive work of the council.

**Based on above, London Borough of Tower Hamlets resolves:**

1. To formally ask the Government, on a cross-party basis, to abandon plans to invite Donald Trump on a State visit to the UK.
2. The Council further calls upon the government to use funding that would have been spent on security and other arrangements for such a state visit to fund charities like the Jo Cox Foundation, in conjunction with other local Tower Hamlets-based charities, that promote peace, dialogue and understanding and also tackle homelessness, loneliness and rough sleeping for our vulnerable citizens both locally and across the country.
3. However, should the Government still choose to go ahead with State Visit, this Council makes clear that President Trump would not be welcome in our Borough.