

Conservative Group Budget Motion Amendments

Proposed: Cllr Andrew Wood

Seconded: Cllr Chris Chapman

This Council welcomes:

1. That the Council has fared better overall than the average of all authorities and against other London Boroughs as regards its Settlement Funding Assessment from the government.
2. That the first of the £3.15 billion grant money provided by the government to the Mayor of London is now starting to deliver more new affordable homes in Tower Hamlets
3. That the UK economy & employment numbers have continued to grow
4. The huge amount of funds received from developers (S106 & Community Infrastructure Levy) & the government (New Homes Bonus) for delivering the most new homes in the country has led to the Council having £169 million of funds to spend on improving the Borough and delivering the new infrastructure required.

This Council supports:

1. A 2% council tax rise to fund adult social care.

This Council further believes:

1. That the temporary investment of reserves in funding extra police officers is not sustainable and that the £270k cut that the Council made in 2016 (which we proved did not need to be made then) should be reversed and £1.6 million be granted to the Police to spend as they see fit within Tower Hamlets
2. That there needs to be a much stronger focus on enhancing the job opportunities of our residents. But with 23% of our residents saying they have low or no proficiency in spoken English we have too many people who cannot compete effectively in London's job market. We need to be funding English language classes (ESOL). to improve resident's knowledge of English and improve their job prospects. That integration of the community is far better enhanced, and greater opportunities made open to residents, if they spoke English. This should be funded by eliminating spending on non-statutory translation.
3. Since we pointed out last year that the twenty-two full time staff working in the Communications team do not provide an output commensurate with their numbers communication has got worse not better. For example, this week, no communication to residents about the Big Half marathon on the 4th March which will close down many roads in the Borough.

4. That the 'One Tower Hamlets' agenda is a legacy of the previous controversial administration, which worked on any principle but 'One Tower Hamlets', and should accordingly be reduced.
5. We are disappointed that our proposal last year to work in co-operation with other Labour Authorities has effectively been ignored. There is only one proposal at some point in the future to share Internal Audit with another Borough. Boroughs across London have made substantial savings through merging back-office functions and even some front-line services. Creating such joint workings with other boroughs should now be less difficult than it was under an isolationist administration but clearly the Council still believes it can do everything better than anybody else which from experience is not the case.
6. That large densely populated areas of Tower Hamlets do not have a publicly provided CCTV network, even in those areas previously attacked by terrorists or where acid attacks have taken place. Partially as a result wards like Limehouse (with no permanent CCTV cameras) have seen a spate of violent muggings. Extra CCTV control room staff would help monitor additional cameras funded through S106/CIL/NHB.
7. There has been an increase in littering (NOX canisters in particular) and graffiti across the Borough. This encourages more bad behaviour, more littering and more graffiti so we wish to invest more in teams that clean up this kind of ASB related rubbish to more clearly indicate that it is not welcome. Residents want a clean and safe Borough.
8. That in future New Homes Bonus receipts should be invested in uses that either generate more income, save costs or deliver infrastructure required to support development. Once spent it is gone and therefore should be spent in areas that provide a long-term benefit.

This Council amends the Mayor's budget as follows:

1. Implement the following reductions in expenditure:

Description	2018/19 Impact	Detail
Communication budget	£501,960	Reduction of staff and external spend in Comm's team
Mother tongue	£670,000	Remove budget for Mother Tongue
One Tower Hamlets	£327,000	Reduction in external payments budget for One Tower Hamlets
Trade Union Facility Time	£258,000	Removal of funding for full time staff
Celebration events	£50,000	Removal of two celebration events
Non-statutory translation	£82,000	Stop non-statutory translation of documents into foreign languages in order to promote cohesion, and follow DCLG best practice (see ESOL below)
Media monitoring	£25,000	Ending external cost of monitoring THC news

2. Implement the following increases in expenditure:

Description	2018/19 Impact	Detail
Police extra funding	£1,613,960	To be left to Borough Commander whether to invest in additional officers, stations or overtime allowing SNT's team to do more night work
ESOL classes	£100,000	Fund extra ESOL classes in order to promote cohesion in the borough and employability
Cleaning	£100,000	Extra resources to clean ASB related rubbish or graffiti
CCTV control staff	£100,000	Extra operators to staff control room