

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009**

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7**

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

**SUMMARY**

1. Set out overleaf are the questions submitted by Members of the Council for response by Members of the Executive at the Council meeting on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009.
2. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted.
3. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. There is a time limit of thirty minutes for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any question not answered within this time will be dealt with by way of a written response. The Mayor will decide the time allocated to each question.
5. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

## QUESTIONS

24 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

**7.1 Question from Councillor Fazlul Haque to the Lead Member for Employment and Skills, Councillor Oliur Rahman**

Can the Lead Member for Employment and Skills tell us what progress has been made to improve partnership working with other public sector organisations to help our residents find work in these difficult times?

**7.2 Question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

Would the Lead Member for Housing and Development confirm how many cases have been brought by developers for return of Section 106 contributions that has failed to be spent by the Council in a timely manner have been brought forward and/or settled and what are the sums of money involved?

**7.3 Question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Can the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener tell us how many drugs arrests have been made in the borough in the last three months and what is being done to ensure that the pressure on drug dealers is kept up as well as telling us what is being done to combat anti-social street drinking in the borough?

**7.4 Question from Councillor Abjol Miah to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

In the light of the statement by the Prime Minister that the spending announced for additional social housing will be earmarked for local people, would you provide statistics concerning the allocation of social housing in Tower Hamlets to "non-local people", however they might be defined, in particular how many people have been permanently housed off the Tower Hamlets common waiting list over, say, the last four years, how many qualified on the basis of length of time on the waiting list as opposed to enhanced priority arising from medical and other needs, and how many of those allocated housing had not been resident in the borough for more than, say, one year, five years and ten years?

**7.5 Question from Councillor Waiseul Islam to the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Rofique Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure tell us how many people attended the Baishaki Mela in May and whether he considers this year's event to be an improvement on previous years?

**7.6 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Could the Lead Member explain why the Council's expenditure on media and public relations has risen 29% from £980,000 in 2007/8 to £1,267,000 in 2008/9 and does he feel this represents good value for money for Council taxpayers?

**7.7 Question from Councillor Shafiqul Haque to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

It was agreed that the Section 106 money from IDCF would be distributed within the borough. Could the Leader update us on this? Could the Leader also let us know how much Section 106 money is available to spend by the Council on relevant projects?

**7.8 Question from Councillor Tim Archer to the Lead Member for Employment and Skills, Councillor Oliur Rahman**

Will the Lead Member for Employment please provide an update on unemployment levels in the borough, specifically commenting on youth unemployment and graduate unemployment, and how the borough compares to others?

**7.9 Question from Councillor Muhammad Abdullah Salique to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member for Resources and Performance confirm that despite their protestations in the local press about Special Responsibility Allowances, some opposition leaders will be taking significant pay rises themselves this year?

**7.10 Question from Councillor Dulal Uddin to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

Is the Leader of the Council aware of the widespread worry and anger amongst many Tower Hamlets residents about the imminent construction of the Tipaimukh Dam by the Indian government on the border with Bangladesh, that this dam poses an acute environmental threat to large parts of the Sylhet region of Bangladesh, that many residents have ties of family, friends, ancestry and in some instances property, in the Sylhet region, and will he join with me in urging the Indian government to stop the construction of the dam until necessary reassurances about the environmental impact of the dam have been forthcoming and to urge the British government to make representations on behalf of the many concerned residents of Tower Hamlets to the Indian government over this matter?

**7.11 Question from Councillor Lutfa Begum to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Can the Lead Member for Children's Services tell us whether there are any plans to use facilities in local schools to improve the provision of youth facilities in the borough on evenings and weekends?

**7.12 Question from Councillor Tim O'Flaherty to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Could the Lead Member advise me how many students, teachers and other staff in the Borough's schools have been affected by swine flu? Can he advise of the measures taken to prevent and restrict the spread of swine flu in the Borough's school and can he advise what criteria are used to decide whether a school should close as a result of an outbreak of swine flu?

**7.13 Question from Councillor David Snowdon to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Would the Lead Member for Resources confirm that this Council follows best practice guidelines within its Audit Committee?

**7.14 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah to the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Dr. Anwara Ali**

Could the Lead Member clarify what rights GP practices have to expel patients from their lists, what powers the PCT has to override GP practices in this regard, what rights patients have to appeal against and seek the reversal of expulsion from GP lists which they believe to be unfair and whether the Lead Member believes that the situation with regard to patients' rights in this regard should be the subject of a joint review between the

Council and the PCT?

**7.15 Question from Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Could the Lead Member describe the functions and activities of the Tower Hamlets Pupil Referral Unit, and could he explain the plans for the use of the PRU of the former local housing office at 73 Bishops Way, Bethnal Green North?

**7.16 Question from Councillor Dr. Emma Jones to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

Will the Leader of the Council confirm how many electors of the Borough who had applied for postal votes for the recent European election contacted the Council regarding the non arrival of their ballot paper?

**7.17 Question from Councillor Mamun Rashid to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

In the light of the recent Ofsted report into exclusions from primary school, would you provide statistics on exclusions from primary and secondary schools in LBTH, including how many and at what age plus distribution of exclusions across the primary schools in the borough, i.e. are there some schools that don't exclude and others that have a lot of exclusions, if there are guidelines issued to schools on exclusions by the borough and whether you will consider issuing guidelines in the light of the Ofsted report if not, or alter the ones that do exist, and also provide statistics on internal exclusions which appears to be the preferred Ofsted option for school students at least under the age of seven.

**7.18 Question from Councillor Abdul Matin to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Could the Lead Member advise how faith organisations and parent groups are involved in decisions about the age at which children being to receive sex and relationship education in the borough's schools? What is the earliest age that students will receive sex and relationship education in the borough?

**7.19 Question from Councillor Peter Golds to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

Will the Lead Member for Housing confirm how many lifts within council owned homes are past their estimated life expectancy, in view of the

revelation that there is at least one lift that has exceeded life expectancy by twenty years?

**7.20 Question from Councillor Harun Miah to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Could you explain why lights are left on permanently in parts of the Town Hall and does he not agree with me that this is a waste of energy and thereby needlessly contributes to global warming and would he consider a strategy for ensuring that lights in the Town Hall are turned off when the areas they are lighting are not in use and could he also provide details of what further measures he is taking to ensure energy efficiency not only in the Town Hall but across the borough?

**7.21 Question from Councillor Ahmed Hussain to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Rania Khan**

Will the Lead Member for Regeneration confirm when she is planning to outline the delivery of the cemetery that her party has promised in the 2006 election manifesto?

**7.22 Question from Councillor Abdul Munim to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Would the Lead Member clarify what rights governors, including parent governors, have to know about the salaries being paid to teaching staff at schools in Tower Hamlets of which they are governors?

**7.23 Question from Councillor Philip Briscoe to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

The recent Place survey undertaken by the DCLG found that the fear of anti-social behaviour amongst Tower Hamlets residents is the second highest of any local authority in the country. What steps will the Lead Member be taking to reverse this unacceptable level of concern?

**7.24 Question from Councillor Shirley Houghton to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

As the Council is currently undertaking a process of consulting and upgrading parks in the borough, will the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener please provide a full list of all parks where investment is planned and for each park full details of:

The total expenditure budget for each park;

The delivery timescale for each individual park;

The consultation timescale for each individual park:

How consultation for each park has been/will be carried out – to include method of consultation, number of residents contacted and selection criteria used to select which residents to consult; and

The results of each individual consultation that has already taken place, this response to include full details of participation levels of each individual consultation?