

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 15th JULY 2009

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11

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

SUMMARY

1. Thirteen motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for the Council meeting on Wednesday 15th July 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 Tim Archer regarding local bin taxes/Waste Incentive Pilot Schemes

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.
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.
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.

11.2 Motion submitted by Councillor Marc Francis regarding Strangers into Citizens campaign

Proposed: Councillor Marc Francis
Seconded: Councillor Lutfur Rahman

This Council notes:

That the government is committed to tightening UK border controls and introducing new monitoring and assessment systems into the immigration process;

That the Home Office estimates that there are currently around 500,000 irregular migrants living and working in Britain, around 400,000 of them in London;

The contribution of irregular migrants to the national and regional economy;

That in the current economic crisis, irregular migrants are more vulnerable than ever to exploitation and abuse;

That the “strangers into citizens” campaign, orchestrated by London Citizens, has cross-party support from Councils, MPs and both the current and former Mayors of London.

This Council resolves:

To publicly support London Citizen’s “Strangers into Citizens” campaign for the one-off regularization of long-term irregular migrants;

To encourage other Local Authorities to do so;

To urge the Government to adopt the Strangers into Citizens proposal for an earned right of residence subject to and in accordance with the tests applied to other migrants.

11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding future provision of a Multi-Faith Burial Ground

Proposed: Councillor Stephanie Eaton
Seconded: Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan

This Council notes:

1. All Councils are required to produce a Local Development Framework and in Tower Hamlets that will comprise a series of Development Plan Documents including a Core Strategy and a Site Allocations document.

2. Tower Hamlets Council has recently undertaken consultation on the second phase of the Local Development Framework - Core Strategy. The consultation document 'Core Strategy - Options and Alternatives for Places' looked at how growth and change will affect the different places in Tower Hamlets.
3. The places plan for LAPs 5 and 6 identifies as one of the long term objectives (5-15 years) the plan "to regenerate the Bow Common Gasworks site as a place for family housing "

This Council further notes:

1. The longstanding wishes of local people for a new multi-faith burial facility in the Borough
2. The difficulty of finding suitable sites for a multi-faith burial facility in the Borough

This Council proposes:

1. That the Local Development Framework Core Strategy sets out clear criteria for identifying appropriate locations for a future multi-faith burial facility
2. That the Local Development Framework Core Strategy does not identify the Bow Common Gasworks site solely as a place for family housing
3. That the Site Allocations Development Plan Document explores all appropriate options for a future multi-faith burial facility within the borough for example Bow Common Gasworks.

11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding Education cuts

Proposed: Councillor Abjol Miah

Seconded: Councillor Dulal Uddin

This Council notes that:

- 1) 11,000 students places and hundreds of jobs are in jeopardy at London Metropolitan University due to alleged past financial mismanagement
- 2) London Metropolitan has attracted many students from less educationally advantaged backgrounds
- 3) the loss of student places at London Met will seriously and adversely impact on educational opportunities for young people in Tower Hamlets
- 4) the Government has washed its hands of any responsibility in this disaster and is allowing these swingeing cuts to go ahead.

This Council notes that:

1) Tower Hamlets College is seeing cuts which will lose some 1,000 classes and make some 40 lecturers redundant

2) many of the classes that are to be lost are English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

3) many of the outreach projects involving ESOL are threatened with closure

4) the loss of these classes will seriously adversely impact on members of the BME community in Tower Hamlets and within that community women

This Council notes that:

1) teachers at St Paul's Way Community School are being forced to reapply for their jobs

2) the numbers of teaching staff are to be reduced through redundancy

3) support for pupils with Special Educational Needs is being reduced

4) the curriculum is being narrowed

This Council believes that these attacks on secondary, further and higher education in the borough are a disaster and must be stopped immediately

This Council supports:

1) the campaigns against these cuts being waged by the trade unions, parents and students

2) any industrial action that staff decide is appropriate to preserve jobs and save educational opportunity in Tower Hamlets

This Council believes the Council Leader and Lead Members should make urgent representations to the Government to find the funding necessary to stop the cuts at London Met, Tower Hamlets College and St Paul's Way Community School.

11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Ahmed Hussain regarding Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in the Borough

Proposed: Councillor Ahmed Hussain

Seconded: Councillor Tim Archer

The Government, under its Education Strategy, proposes to introduce Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) to students as young as five years old.

There are serious concerns amongst parents within Tower Hamlets regarding this proposal and the Council resolves that the final decision should be that of the parent of primary age children as to whether the child receives SRE.

11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Ohid Ahmed regarding opposing Tory cuts

Proposed: Councillor Ohid Ahmed
Seconded: Councillor Joshua Peck

This Council notes;

That Tory Shadow Chancellor George Osborne has proposed sweeping 10% cuts to all government services.

That London Mayor, Boris Johnson, strongly opposes the government's plans to introduce a new tax bracket for the super rich.

That flagship Tory borough Hammersmith and Fulham has been in secret talks with property developers to demolish residents' homes.

That while it is clear that spending needs to be monitored closely in these difficult times, such a broad brush approach would inevitably led to hardship for the most vulnerable in society.

That in Tower Hamlets, the levels of poverty, unemployment and deprivation mean that the impact of such cuts would be even worse.

This Council resolves:

To fight any cuts to frontline services.

To ensure that the load of this current economic crisis is spread as fairly as possible.

To increase the number of social rented and affordable homes in the borough.

11.7 Motion submitted by Councillor Abdul Matin regarding eliminating excessive punishment for minor parking offences

Proposed: Councillor Abdul Matin
Seconded: Councillor Stephanie Eaton

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;
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 penalty charge for a breach of a parking regulations is 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 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;
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 directs:

1. Officers to 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 currently would attract a penalty charge notice £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days) results in a payment by the resident of this £60 penalty charge plus £200 fee for release of the vehicle from the pound;
2. Officers to provide a report to Cabinet by September 2009 which recommends measures to eliminate disproportionate and excessive 'punishment' in relation to penalties for parking offences.

11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding Overcrowding Strategy

Proposed: Councillor Harun Miah

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

A) This Council notes:

1) East End Life reported on 11th May “One of the key elements of the [housing] strategy is an urgent £20 million package of investment designed to help an extra 500 families escape overcrowded conditions”.

2) This claim was untrue.

3) Council Officers have confirmed that the £20 million is in fact £19.4 million and that this is expected to purchase 100 three bedroom family homes helping a maximum 200 families move out of overcrowding over a three year period.

4) Even this plan to purchase 100 homes is over-optimistic given the current market price for ex-council three bedroom properties in the borough and reasonable expectations about future price movements in the housing market.

5) that the parking free requirements which attach to many new build projects in the borough effectively preclude many overcrowded families from bidding for these properties because of their dependency on large family cars for economical travelling.

6) that the “affordable” housing strategy has singularly failed to make housing affordable to those languishing on the waiting list as the recent committee review of this strategy chaired by Councillor Waiseul Islam made abundantly clear.

B) This Council deplores the inaccurate reporting of the housing strategy which was put on the front page of East End Life and then distributed to every household in Tower Hamlets as raising false expectations for the thousands of families living in overcrowded conditions in Tower Hamlets

C) This Council believes

1) an investigation should be undertaken by relevant authorities as to how a paper paid for out of council taxpayers’ money and which should only be providing essential and impartial information to the residents of Tower Hamlets came to present an untrue picture of the Council’s housing strategy.

2) that the Council’s housing strategy, even in the exaggerated terms it has been presented, remains woefully inadequate in addressing the overcrowding problem in Tower Hamlets which stands at more than 7,000 families on the Council’s restricted definition of overcrowding and which was estimated by Shelter to include 12,000 families.

3) that only a crash programme of council house building can seriously address the problem of overcrowding in this borough in the short to medium term.

D) This Council welcomes the motion laid before parliament by George Galloway MP calling on the Government to pass legislation to stop council's using taxpayers' money to finance weekly newspapers which put out propaganda to try and benefit the ruling group on the Council.

11.9 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

11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding Robin Hood Gardens

Proposed: Councillor Dulal Uddin

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

A) This Council notes with regard to Robin Hood Gardens:

- 1) the continued concern and worry of the residents of their future and the future of the estate.
- 2) the desire of residents to retain their secure tenancies and to remain with the council.
- 3) the desire of residents to have any replacement homes directly built by the Council and for the estate not to be transferred to a Registered Social Landlord.
- 4) continued concern of residents over the delays in giving residents decant status.
- 5) continued concern over how other adult members of households who are not tenants will be treated in the decant.
- 6) continued concern over the lack of a written guarantee of the right to return to the estate if it is demolished.
- 7) continued concern over what will happen if residents and Regeneration Partners cannot agree the Charter.

B) This Council believes:

- 1) the redevelopment of Robin Hood Gardens should be carried out directly by the Council and that the Council should approach the Government to seek necessary permissions and support financially and in other respects to do this.
- 2) residents should retain their secure tenancies, be guaranteed like for like decant and like for like right of return to the estate when developments has been completed.

11.11 Motion submitted by Councillor Mamun Rashid regarding Tipaimukh Dam

Proposed: Councillor Mamun Rashid

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

A) This Council notes that:

1) the Indian government is proceeding with the construction of the Tipaimukh dam just one kilometre from the Bangladesh border.

2) this dam threatens to deprive much of the Sylhet region of Bangladesh of essential water and threatens the welfare and the livelihoods of tens of millions of people in Bangladesh.

3) this dam is being built on an earthquake fault line and that an earthquake in the area could breach the dam and flood a significant part of Bangladesh with potentially large loss of life.

4) the dam is almost certainly being constructed in defiance of international law.

5) many residents of Tower Hamlets have friends and family living in the threatened part of Sylhet, and have historical connections to this part of Bangladesh where their ancestors are buried and some have property there.

6) there is widespread concern amongst some Tower Hamlets residents registered by large meetings that have been held on the issue at the London Muslim Centre and elsewhere.

7) George Galloway MP has laid a motion before parliament calling on the Indian government not to proceed with the construction of the dam until adequate reassurances on the matters of concern both to citizens of Bangladesh but also Manapur in India have been provided and that the project should be abandoned if those assurances are not forthcoming.

B) This Council believes that the Council Leader and the Cabinet should add their voices to those of many others in expressing their opposition to the construction of this dam and should write to the Indian government expressing the concerns of many residents in Tower Hamlets about the Tipaimukh Dam.

11.12 Motion submitted by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding Crossrail

Proposed: Councillor Fozol Miah

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

A) This Council notes:

1) there is a £29billion shortfall in the Government's transport budget.

2) that Crossrail will cost at least £16billion and is now in serious jeopardy of being dumped or at least delayed.

3) that serious changes were made to the Crossrail digging strategy not because of the representations of this Council but because of a magnificent campaign against the digging and potential disruption in Tower Hamlets by many community groups and campaigners of which Khoodeelaar was a very important part.

4) that nonetheless there is still a serious threat to Stepping Stones farm and the residents of Stepney from Crossrail.

5) that the advantage to residents in Tower Hamlets from Crossrail is minimal.

B) This Council believes the money being spent on Crossrail should be subject to urgent review to assess whether it could be better spent elsewhere in the transport system now that there is such extreme pressure on transport investment.

11.13 Motion submitted by Councillor Abdul Munim regarding Chief Executive's Resignation

Proposed: Councillor Abdul Munim

Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah

A) This Council notes that:

1) The Chief Executive has resigned from his post.

2) this brings to an end a lengthy period of uncertainty in which there was much rumour but all that any of us were officially told was that the Chief Executive was suddenly "on leave".

3) the events leading up to the Chief Executive's decision to resign were precipitated by the Leader of the Council without consultation with the leader of the other parties represented in the Council.

4) The Chief Executive's precipitate departure may cost the council taxpayers a large sum of money in severance pay.

5) the "explanation" for his departure as being the need for a "fresh approach" to important policy areas the Council is responsible for.

B) This Council deplores the process which led to the Chief Executive's resignation and the substantial costs to the taxpayer that have been incurred as a result.

C) This Council believes that:

1) The Chief Executive did the job he was appointed to two and a half years ago to the best of his ability and effectively.

2) a fresh approach is needed, but that this did not need a change of Chief Executive.

3) the fresh approach we need is a fundamental change from the failed New Labour policies of the past.

4) such a fresh approach will only occur once New Labour are no longer in a majority on this Council.