

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2009**

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**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 14<sup>th</sup> October 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.

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

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

### **7.1 Question from Councillor Waiseul Islam to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Can the Lead Member let us know what the situation is regarding the use of CCTV cameras for parking enforcement in the borough, especially around Brick Lane and the Royal London Hospital?

### **7.2 Question from Councillor Tim Archer to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

Why, given that there are 23,000 people on the borough's housing waiting list, did the Labour Government not give Tower Hamlets Council any money from the most recent round of grants for building new council houses, despite the borough applying for a share of the money?

### **7.3 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed to the Lead Member for Employment and Skills, Councillor Oliur Rahman**

Can the Lead Member for Employment and Skills tell us whether the Jobs Fair he promised us is being delivered, which organisations are taking part and how he feels it will benefit our young people?

### **7.4 Question from Councillor Abjol Miah to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

Does the Leader of the Council share with me my dismay that the Lapdancing Association has spent at least £30,000 lobbying to try to water down legislation that will enable councils to clamp down on the proliferation of sex encounter venues, that Liberal Democrat and Tory peers have moved amendments in the unselected House of Lords to try to water down this legislation and that the Tory Front Bench in the House of Lords intends to try again when parliament returns from the summer recess and does he not also agree that this shows that the Tory Party, which proclaims to be the party of "family values" appears to be prefer supporting the profits of these sex encounter venues than the fight against the degradation and exploitation of women?

**7.5 Question from Councillor Mohammed Shahid Ali to the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Dr Anwara Ali**

Can the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing tell us what is being done by the Council to help older residents cope with the effect of the recession and are there any long-term plans to deal with the increase of elderly people in the borough?

**7.6 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck**

What is being done to reduce the incidence of homophobic hate crime and to reduce fear of crime among the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender section of our community?

**7.7 Question from Councillor Carli Harper-Penman to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member for Resources and Performance tell us what the Cabinet's intentions are regarding Council Tax and how our Council Tax rates compare to other London Boroughs?

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

Would the Lead Member for Resources outline how much the London Borough of Tower Hamlets spends each year on recruitment advertising?

**7.9 Question from Councillor Fazlul Haque to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Rania Khan**

Can the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships let us know what the plans are for the participatory budgeting process this year, what lessons have been learned from last year and how the process could be improved?

**7.10 Question from Councillor Dulal Uddin to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Is the Lead Member for Children's Services aware of the recent Ofsted report on the teaching and learning of ESOL at Tower Hamlets College as good and would he confirm that ESOL teaching at the college has provided "value for money" in the past and would continue to do so in the future if properly funded and would he take urgent steps to meet with the college authorities and

representatives of the lecturers' union with a view to ensuring that government money made available to the council for ESOL teaching is provided to the college to restore ESOL courses which are currently going to be cut?

**7.11 Question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

Can the Leader of the Council let us know his view on the "budget airline" business model for Councils proposed by his counterpart in Barnet and whether he feels this is the right way to run an institution that exists to benefit the public?

**7.12 Question from Councillor Tim O'Flaherty to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

How many empty properties have been reported to the Council since 2006? How many of these properties have subsequently been brought into use and how many times has the Council used its powers of Compulsory Purchase to bring empty properties into use?

**7.13 Question from Councillor Salim Ullah to the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Tower Hamlets was one of 10 boroughs in the country to win funding from the Find Your Talent initiative. Can the Lead Member for Children's Services tell us what progress there has been on this?

**7.14 Question from Councillor Philip Briscoe to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

How does the Leader of the Council intend to ensure that the views and concerns of the residents of Tower Hamlets are suitably expressed to the operators of London City Airport?

**7.15 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck**

Does the Lead Member agree that the far right British National Party and its fellow travellers have been doing all in their power to foster hatred against the Muslim community, that all mainstream politicians should be wary of encouraging prejudice against the Muslim community which will further encourage support for the far right's agenda and that it is regrettable that one of our local MPs has proposed to outlaw the right of members of our community to hold wedding ceremonies in line with their religious traditions and also that the Tory Party has entered into an alliance in the European

Parliament with elements of the far right who have celebrated the Waffen SS and expressed anti-Semitic, racist and homophobic sentiments and does he agree that all legitimate political parties in Tower Hamlets should do all in their power to ensure community harmony rather than community division and hatred?

**7.16 Question from Councillor Abdul Matin to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

What is the annual cost of the parking enforcement service? How many enforcement cases have been brought by parking services in the past year, how many convictions were obtained and what was the total value of the costs awarded to the Council in successful prosecutions?

**7.17 Question from Councillor Shirley Houghton to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

In this time of increased financial pressures, does the Leader of the Council consider the sharing of resources and staff with external organisations to be desirable and prudent or not?

**7.18 Question from Councillor Harun Miah to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Is the Lead Member aware of the recent decision of the Trades Union Congress to support a boycott of goods produced in illegal settlements built by Israel in occupied land and by companies involved in the occupation and the building of the wall, and that the Israeli government is now intending to go ahead with the building of a huge settlement near Bethlehem with some 40,000 homes and in the light of these events would he be able to specify what actions his council has taken in the light of the motion passed at full council earlier this year with regard to Israel and Palestine and would he not agree that it is about time this council took stronger action to oppose Israeli aggression and support the beleaguered Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank and would he note that a further aid convoy to Gaza is due to leave London on December 6<sup>th</sup>?

**7.19 Question from Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Rania Khan**

Does the Lead Member agree with me that the decision to use the former Local housing office on Bishop's Way in Bethnal Green North is welcome, and will provide much a needed community facility in a building that has been left empty for some years. Will she join with me in thanking the members of the

local community who have worked very hard to ensure that the best use is made of this building?

**7.20 Question from Councillor Peter Golds to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Will the Lead Member for Resources explain what plans he has to cover the 9.3% reduction in government expenditure, which will result in a reduction of the grant received by this Council, as outlined in HM Treasury briefings provided to the Labour Government?

**7.21 Question from Councillor Abdul Munim to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Is the Lead Member aware of the tragic suicide of Fiona Pilkington and the death of her daughter following a long period of anti-social behaviour directed against them and is he willing to undertake an urgent review of procedures in this borough to ensure that problems of acute anti-social behaviour as in this case are properly picked up and dealt with by the authorities and would he in particular be prepared to review with the police the operation of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and in particular address the complaints councillors frequently receive that phone numbers for SNTs are never answered and phone messages are not returned?

**7.22 Question from Councillor Dr Emma Jones to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

How many blocks of flats in the borough, designated as social housing are without valid fire risk assessments?

**7.23 Question from Councillor Mamun Rashid to the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Dr Anwara Ali**

Is the Lead Member aware of the recent case where an out of hours doctor employed by private contractors wrongly prescribed treatment which then killed the patient and that there is now widespread concern that under-qualified and/or exhausted doctors are being used either directly or indirectly by the NHS who may put patients at risk and would she agree to hold urgent discussions with the chief executive of Tower Hamlets PCT and of Barts and the Royal London Trust to review the systems in place in Tower Hamlets to ensure no similar episodes should take place here?

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

Will the Lead Member for waste explain why, after years of dedicated service, he is wasting the services of the borough's Head of Waste Education?

**7.25 Question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck**

Will the Lead Member for equalities indicate how he and his Labour colleagues will, on the one hand proclaim their commitment to One Tower Hamlets and on the other condone senior appointments panels which consist entirely of men including male Labour councillors?