

LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT – Opposition motion for debate from the Conservative Group - regarding the Queen’s Speech and Manifesto Commitments

Proposer: Mayor John Biggs

Seconder: Cllr Sabina Akhtar

Added text underlined

Deleted text scored out.

This Council notes:

- The election on the 12th December 2019 of a new majority Conservative government.
- A Queens Speech on the 19th December 2019 containing a large number of proposed Bills, some of direct relevance and interest to Tower Hamlets Council.
- That the government was elected with a new manifesto containing a number of sections of direct relevance and interest to Tower Hamlets Council ~~as noted below.~~
- The increase in the Public Works Loan Board interest rate from 1.82% to 2.82% in October 2019.

This Council further notes:

Voters in both constituencies in Tower Hamlets voted overwhelmingly for Labour Members of Parliament to represent them.

That the new Conservative manifesto & Queens Speech contains a number of sections directly relevant to Tower Hamlets. Some examples (but not limited to) include measures relating to Right to Buy, social housing, development infrastructure, Brexit and electric vehicle infrastructure:

~~“We will maintain our commitment to a Right to Buy for all council tenants. We will also maintain the voluntary Right to Buy scheme agreed with housing associations. Following the successful voluntary pilot scheme in the Midlands, we will evaluate new pilot areas in order to spread the dream of home ownership to even more people.”~~

For example we in Tower Hamlets could ask to be one of the new pilot areas in order to ensure that the new voluntary scheme works in London.

~~“As Boris Johnson has promised, we will bring forward a Social Housing White Paper which will set out further measures to empower tenants and support the continued supply of social homes. This will include measures to provide greater redress, better regulation and improve the quality of social housing.”~~

We in Tower Hamlets need to be influencing this White Paper given both the large stock of existing as well as the large number of new build social homes we have which bring with them unique issues.

~~“Infrastructure first. We will amend planning rules so that the infrastructure – roads, schools, GP surgeries – comes before people move into new homes”~~

Given that Tower Hamlets is the most important deliverer of new homes in the country (exemplified by a record 10th year of New Homes Bonus receipts) this is a critically important for us to ensure that these new planning rules work for us here in Tower Hamlets.

~~“In particular, we will make the UK the leading global hub for life sciences after Brexit.”~~

~~We should work with the government to make the Life Sciences centre in Whitechapel the leading centre in London if not the country.~~

~~“We will invest £1 billion in completing a fast charging network to ensure that everyone is within 30 miles of a rapid electric vehicle charging station.”~~

~~With more than 40,000 vehicles registered in Tower Hamlets it is clear that we need to substantially expand the charging network as a new generation of electric vehicles arrive so we should be aggressively bidding for a share of this money.~~

~~There are many more similar examples in the manifesto and Queens Speech which we need to explore.~~

This Council resolves:

Following the election of a new majority Conservative government Tower Hamlets ~~to set up a new working group (modelled on the Tower Hamlets Brexit Commission)~~ should continue to work with other London Boroughs, the GLA and London MPs through existing bodies such as London Councils and the LGA to protect and promote Tower Hamlets and secure the interests of London as an integral part of one nation.

That ~~this group~~ the council should seek to constructively engage with the new governments legislative agenda in order to ensure that the voice of Tower Hamlets specifically and other London Boroughs more generally are heard in the legislative process ~~to ensure that those new Acts of Parliament work effectively here.~~ and to actively campaign against any new measures or laws which would be detrimental to residents in Tower Hamlets.

That as a first step that we write to Sajid Javid and Robert Jenrick seeking a change to the Public Works Loan Board interest rate policy. We should request that borrowing to invest in building much needed new Council homes and new infrastructure should be charged at a lower interest rate than borrowing to buy commercial properties to generate a financial return for local authorities.