

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Council</b>  19 January 2020	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Petitions to Council for presentation and debate.</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services Zoe Folley, Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## INTRODUCTION:

1. This report sets out details of the valid petitions submitted for the Council meeting on Wednesday 19 February 2020
2. The Council's Constitution provides for up to four petitions to be heard at the Budget Council meeting, which relate to the Council's budget or to the setting of the Council Tax, in line with the Council's Petition scheme. These are taken in order of receipt. Should more than four petitions be received, all remaining petitions will be listed to be formally noted by Council.
3. The Petitions Scheme also states that petitions for debate (those with or in excess of 2,000 signatures from persons who live, work or study in the Borough) will take precedence over the Petitions, described in paragraph 2 above. In such cases, the Petitioner may request a debate on the Petition.
4. The following two Petitions have been received for this Budget Council meeting. Both of which concern the Community Language Service: A Petition for debate (with over 2000 signatures) and a Petition for presentation. Details of the Petitions are set out below.
5. In discussion with the Speaker of the Council, it has been agreed to take both petitions under one agenda item. However, in view of the size of the petitions, both petitions will be presented before the petition debate takes place. Details of the process are set out under Paragraph 6.

#### **Item 4.1 - Petition for Debate submitted by Mr Shahaur Khan and others.**

We, the undersigned parent/guardians/carers/residents/school children/third sector voluntary charitable community organisations of Tower Hamlets and other stakeholders would like to request you to continue the provision of Community Languages within the Community Languages Service (LBTH) for the following reasons:

- It will help our children in the acquisition of the English Language
- It will develop their confidence and self - esteem by improving their knowledge, culture and roots
- It will promote their educational achievements by improving motivation and enhancing cognitive development as well as reducing truancy and exclusions
- It will help our children to improve their skills and community cohesion.
- It will help our children to engage in creative works, keep children off the street and prevent them from being involved in anti social activities, drugs, gang fighting and knife crime, etc.
- It will help our children to take part in a Modern Foreign Languages GCSE/A – Level.

#### **Item 4.2 - Petition for Presentation submitted by Mr Mohammad Abu Hussain and others – Stop the closing of the Tower Hamlets Community Languages Service**

We petition Tower Hamlets Council to amend its budget and not close the Community Language Service, entirely from the financial year 2020. The Mayor and Cabinet have recently decided the service will no longer be funded going forward and will instead be pushed to the voluntary sector which is already struggling. We call on the Mayor and Tower Hamlets Council to reverse the Cabinet decision and re-look at how we can preserve this much valued and historic service that has contributed so much to community cohesion.

We, the undersigned residents in Tower Hamlets fully oppose the decision made by the Cabinet on 18th December 2019 and urge the Mayor to reverse the decision and continue the Community Language service.

## **6. PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING THE PRESENTATIONS BY THE PETITIONERS**

Following consultation with the Speaker: it has been agreed that, whilst the standard format for hearing from each Petitioner shall apply, the order of the speaking shall be varied as follows to assist proceedings:

- Petitioners for Item 4.1 (Petition for debate) to address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
- Members to ask questions of the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
- Petitioners for item 4.2 (Petition for presentation) to address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
- Members to question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
- The Speaker will then invite the Members to debate matters raised by the Petition for debate for 15 minutes. All speeches are limited to a maximum of three minutes
- At the conclusion of the debate, the Speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) a Cabinet Member to respond to the matters raised by both Petitions. The petitions will stand referred to the relevant Corporate Director for a written response.
- Following the petition debate, any motions moved will be put to the vote.

## **7. MOTIONS ON THE PETITION FOR DEBATE.**

During his or her speech any Member may move a motion for the Council's consideration relevant to matters in the petition (this does not require the suspension of standing orders). It is requested that Motions relating to the petition be submitted to Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to allow full circulation.

In relation to executive functions, the Council does not have powers to override any executive decision of the Mayor or substitute its own decision. The Council may however pass a motion expressing a view on the matter or referring the matter to the Mayor, calling on him to take some action, or consider or reconsider a decision, with recommendations to inform that consideration. Officers will advise on the constitutional validity of any motion that may be moved

Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.

Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.