

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2010

PETITIONS

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

SUMMARY

1. The Council's constitution as amended provides that a maximum of three petitions are received at any meeting. These are taken in order of receipt. This report sets out the valid petitions submitted for presentation at the Council meeting on Wednesday 8th October 2010.
2. The deadline for receipt of petitions for this meeting is noon on Thursday 2nd December 2010. However, at the time of agenda despatch the maximum number of three petitions had already been received as set out overleaf.
3. In each case the petitioners may address the meeting for no more than three minutes. Members may then question the petitioners for a further four minutes. Finally, the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair of Committee may then respond to the petition for up to three minutes.
4. Any outstanding issues will be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will respond to those outstanding issues in writing within 28 days.
5. Members should confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

5.1 Petition from Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations regarding secure tenancies and other housing issues

“Tenants have the right to a permanent secure home. The Government’s cuts in housing benefit hit council as well as private tenants, cuts to housing services and the Prime Minister’s threat to secure tenancies will not build one new home but create insecurity, poverty and homelessness.

We reject threats to time-limit or means test tenancies in order to force us out of our homes. The answer to the shortage of secure, affordable homes is to build more council housing.

Tenants in Tower Hamlets have fought determined campaigns against privatisation and to defend our homes and rights. We demand the Government:

- Stop housing benefit cuts which hit the elderly, sick, unemployed and vulnerable
- Defend secure tenancies – no time limits or means testing
- Stop the robbery of £2 billion a year from council tenants’ rents
- Improve existing and build new council housing.”

5.2 Petition from Tower Hamlets Joint Trade Unions regarding cuts in public spending

“We the below signed believe that the cuts in Public Spending announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review will have a devastating impact on communities like Tower Hamlets.

The cuts will affect everything from Health and Education, to Benefits and Policing. They will impact on services and on jobs having a huge detrimental impact on the local economy.

We are concerned that the Council has already given notice of the loss of up to 500 posts this financial year with more to follow.

We believe the Con Dem Coalition has no mandate for these savage cuts and the overwhelming majority of people in Tower Hamlets have voted for Mayoral candidates and Councillors expressing opposition to them.

Rather than implementing these cuts we call on the Council to work with Trade Unions and Community Groups to oppose the Con Dem Coalition cuts. This should include widely publicising what the impact of cuts will be on our community, organising a series of community meetings, and supporting the TUC national demonstration on 26 March 2011.”

5.3 Petition from Ms Jackie Turner and others regarding ‘No bed closures and job losses at Barts and the London Hospital!’

“Despite government reassurances that NHS spending will be protected, management at Barts and the London NHS hospitals intend to make extensive cuts in the next three years. This is to meet government rules to become a Foundation Trust. Beds and staff are already cut to the bone. Yet management in Cancer Services recently cut ten acute Oncology beds to save money and have sacked many essential temporary staff.

With these cuts nursing and support staff will be asked to reapply for their jobs in “competitive interviews” and face possible redeployment and even redundancy.

Like all workers in the NHS, nurses and support staff in cancer services and across the Trust work hard to maintain a high standard of health care in increasingly difficult and stressful conditions. Fewer beds have meant ever more acute patients and understaffing has increased pressure on staff.

We urge Tower Hamlets Council to oppose cuts in the borough’s hospitals and to put pressure on the Chief Executive, Peter Morris, to reverse this decision. Cuts in the NHS can only have a detrimental affect on the health of the people of Tower Hamlets, a borough which already has one of the highest standard mortality ratios and lowest life expectancy in the UK.”