

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2014

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

SUMMARY

1. Eleven motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 10th September 2014.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21st May 2008, the motions are listed by turns, one from each group, continuing in rotation until all motions submitted are included. The rotation starts with any group(s) whose motion(s) were 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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.

12.1 Motion regarding primary school performance

Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood

Seconder: Councillor Chris Chapman

This Council notes:

- That in the Bethnal Green & Bow area of the borough, the percentage of primary school children attending a Local Authority school rated as Outstanding by OFSTED has dropped from 29% five years ago, prior the current administration coming in to office, to 8% this year.
- That in the same area the percentage of pupils attending a primary school rated as Inadequate has gone from 0% five years ago to 7% this year.
- That across the whole borough the percentage of children attending a primary school rated as Inadequate (4%) is twice as high as any neighbouring borough.
- That the percentage of primary school children attending a school rated as Outstanding in Tower Hamlets (15%) would put it towards the bottom of a local league table of schools.
- That this is despite Tower Hamlets receiving approximately the third highest funding per pupil in London.

This Council therefore asks that the Overview & Scrutiny committee investigate the causes for this decline and report back to full Council as soon as possible.

12.2 Motion regarding the Council's budget

Proposer: Councillor Shiria Khatun

Seconder: Councillor Rachael Saunders

This Council notes:

1. The Tower Hamlets Council Cabinet paper of July 2013, which set out the budget cuts imposed by Government which will mean that this Council needs to make £28.4m of cuts in 2015/16 and a further £39m in 2016/17.
2. The failure of previous budget consultation processes, with few people engaging before concrete proposals were published.

This Council believes:

1. That there is significant increase in local need for services the Council provides, for example in school places and in social care.
2. That the Conservative led government is attacking deprived communities, including Tower Hamlets to pursue their ideological cuts agenda.
3. That it is vital that the decision making process for the budget is fair, and is seen to be fair.
4. That all candidates for the election of Mayor of Tower Hamlets stood in the full knowledge of the difficult decisions they were going to have to make.
5. That in a place as diverse as Tower Hamlets, with real need across the whole of our community, transparency is vital to maintaining trust.
6. That the Council being open about the tough decisions it needs to make will help local partners including other public sector organisations and local voluntary sector and social enterprises consider where they can collaborate to make shared savings.
7. That Labour councils across the UK have invested in partnerships and infrastructure to increase resilience in the face of cuts.

This Council resolves:

1. To campaign to challenge the Conservative led government's austerity agenda, and to make clear to local people that the cuts are imposed on us from Government.
2. To call on the Mayor to set out as soon as possible how he intends to protect the services local people rely on.
3. To call on the Mayor to start a dialogue across all political groups represented on the Council, to ensure all perspectives are heard before decisions are made.
4. To call for transparency in decision making, and to oppose cuts being made without accountability, whether through tightening criteria for access to social care or allowing service provision to wither through not replacing officers who leave.

12.3 Motion regarding High Court challenge against Jeremy Hunt

Proposer: Councillor Abdul Asad

Seconder: Councillor Rabina Khan

This Council notes:

- The Secretary of State's decision to remove MPIG funding, which has put 5 surgeries in our borough at risk
- That Tower Hamlets is not the only borough suffering, with potential closure of at least 22 surgeries in similarly deprived areas such as Hackney and Newham and a potential 98 surgeries overall in the UK
- The brave High Court challenge by Danny Currie, a disabled resident in the borough which relies on these GP surgeries
- That despite rallies, the Mayor writing two letters to the Secretary of State around the loss of MPIG funding, and a funding formula having been created by the CCG to more fairly allocate resources, that Jeremy Hunt continues to ignore our case

This Council believes

- That this funding is vital in areas like Tower Hamlets where there is high deprivation and some of the highest health needs in the country
- That these cuts are unfairly penalising some of our brilliant surgeries – such as the Jubilee Street Practice which has been awarded the Royal College award for excellence in training and for the quality of its care – and our patients
- That Danny Currie's case quite rightly points out how GP surgeries act as a vital lifeline for those with complex medical needs – making it even more important that these surgeries retain their funding
- That the inevitable result of the closure of surgeries will be an increased pressure on hospital services, especially A&E if surgeries.

This Council agrees:

- To call on the Department of Health and NHS England to ensure that no GP surgeries are forced to close as a result of the MPIG changes.
- That the Mayor continues to work with the Save Our Surgeries Campaign, local GP practices, health workers and patients to lobby NHS England and the Secretary of State to provide long term appropriate and sufficient funding for surgeries.

12.4 Motion regarding election count

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor Chris Chapman

This Council notes the unprecedented report by the Electoral Commission into the delays at the verification and count for the May 2014 elections in Tower Hamlets.

This Council notes that the Commission has made observations and recommendations as to:

- The overall planning and management approach
- The size and suitability of count venues
- The transparency of the verification and count process
- The behaviour and management of attendees at the count

The Council further notes that:

- The Returning Officer has been requested to bring forward plans for the management of the count for the May 2015 General Election no later than the beginning of December 2014.
- Votes were counted in the Mile End Leisure Centre for 2009 European elections; the 2010 combined general and local elections; and the 2014 European election - and that in each case there were severe delays.
- The outcome was Tower Hamlets holding up the declaration of a result for the London region in 2009; that the parliamentary results in 2010 were amongst the last to be declared in the country; and finally in 2014 the resulting delay was so long that the President of the European Parliament commented unfavourably on the delay.
- In the aftermath of the 2009 and 2010 elections, concern was expressed by candidates and agents about the continued use of the Mile End Leisure Centre for the purpose of counting votes.

The Council calls upon the Returning Officer to ensure that this venue is not used again and, following the recommendations of the Electoral Commission, considers a wide range of options for count venues in May 2015. Additionally, the Council requests that the Returning Officer present the overall plan for the management of the 2015 count to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration and comment at the earliest opportunity.

12.5 Motion regarding Vic Johnson House – proposed redevelopment of sheltered housing

Proposer: Councillor Marc Francis

Seconded: Councillor Amina Ali

This Council notes:

- In 2005, Tower Hamlets Council's sheltered blocks - Appian Court, Hugh Platt House, John Bond House, John Tucker House, Lawrence Close, Mandela House, Rochester Court, Vic Johnson House and William Guy Gardens - were transferred to Bethnal Green & Victoria Park Housing Association (BGVPHA) following a ballot of tenants;
- BGVPHA subsequently merged with Labo Housing Association to form Gateway Housing Association;
- New kitchens and bathrooms were fitted in all 240 of the sheltered flats and some improvements were made to communal areas and facilities in those blocks;
- However, one block, John Bond House, was demolished and replaced with general needs housing / shared ownership homes and a second block, William Guy Gardens, was also partially demolished, with a number of elderly residents being decanted into Appian Court and Vic Johnson House in each case;
- Gateway HA has now notified a dozen elderly residents in Vic Johnson House of its intention to decant them so it can partially demolish that block to build additional housing;
- Residents are overwhelmingly against this proposal and have asked councillors for support in their campaign.

This Council believes:

- The demolition of Vic Johnson House is unnecessary and will result in serious upheaval for at least a dozen elderly and vulnerable residents and disruption to the lives of those left living amidst a building site while construction work is carried out;
- This proposal is at odds with the promises made to residents as no mention was made of demolition in Gateway's "Offer Document".

This Council resolves:

- To call on the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to notify Gateway HA that LBTH does not support its proposal and will challenge any attempt to pursue it.

12.6 Motion regarding solidarity with Bangladeshi garment workers and victims of Rana Plaza disaster

Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Seconder: Councillor Shahed Ali

The Council notes:

- The collapse of the Rana Plaza factory building in the Bangladesh capital, Dhaka, on 24 April 2013, killed more than 1,130 garment workers. Over 2,500 people were rescued from the building alive, many with terrible injuries.
- Over 80% of workers in the garment industry are women. The vast majority of those killed and injured in the disaster were women.
- The disaster highlighted the dangerous working conditions prevalent in the garment industry. It also sparked international response about the moral responsibility of Western producers and consumers to ensure they are not the beneficiaries of clothing produced in exploitative and unsafe working conditions.
- A delegation comprising senior trade union officials from Unite the Union and representatives from Tower Hamlets Unite Community are visiting Bangladesh on the week beginning Sept 27th 2014 as part of a fact finding mission. They will be meeting with representatives of the International Labour Organisation, the Bangladeshi government, employers' organisations and the British High Commission, in addition to meeting local trade unionists, victims of the Rana Plaza disaster.
- On their return the delegation will be embarking on a national and local speaking tour, highlighting the conditions of garments workers in Bangladesh and what can be done from the UK to support them.

The Council agrees:

- To offer our support to visit, publicise and promote the delegation's findings and report back meeting in the borough, help highlight what actions residents can take here to show solidarity with the victims of the Rana Plaza disaster, help promote the rights of garment workers to safe and decent working conditions.

12.7 Motion regarding bulk waste collection

Proposer: Councillor Julia Dockerill

Seconder: Councillor Craig Aston

This Council notes that in June 2012, Tower Hamlets introduced fees for the collection of larger items of waste such as furniture and beds.

This Council believes:

- That the new service for bulk waste collection is not working well enough and is leading to increased fly tipping across the borough with dumped mattresses, furniture, building materials, electronics and other large items now regularly clogging up our estates, roads and pavements.
- Dumped bulky items are unsightly and create the impression of an unloved, poorly-managed borough.
- There may be insufficient awareness among residents of how the bulky waste service operates.
- That there appears to be an excessive time lag between collection requests being made and items being removed, and that can encourage others to dump items nearby.
- The cost of collecting dumped waste may well outweigh the amount of revenue generated by bulky waste charges.

This Council resolves:

- To conduct a full and proper review into bulky item collection services to ascertain whether the problem is one of cost, time delay between items being reported and collected, or both.
- That a formal report be presented at the next full Council meeting outlining the findings of that review.
- To rethink the bulky items charge if it is found that the cost of collecting dumped items outweighs the revenue generated by those residents paying the charge.
- To improve awareness of bulk collection services.
- To consider implementing a designated 'collection day' in each ward in order to simplify the process.
- To take concerted action to deter and penalise fly-tippers.

12.8 Motion regarding Chief Executive recruitment

Proposer: Councillor Rachael Saunders

Seconder: Councillor Shiria Khatun

Council notes:

This Council is taking the lead on putting our own house in order, to rebuild the reputation of this borough.

This Council regrets the negative impact on local people of the press coverage of how this council is being led and managed.

The Council is committed to maintaining excellent quality of services for our residents, and recognizes that in order to do this it needs to have strong and stable leadership to support the excellent work of the council staff.

This Council recognizes the work that has been done to date with interim arrangements following the council's previous failure to appoint a chief executive.

This Council confirms its view, as stated verbally by a number of councilors at the 30th July 2014 meeting, that a clear and transparent process for appointing a permanent chief executive to work with the Elected Mayor and councillors to deliver the quality of services for which Tower Hamlets has been known in the past should be put in place.

That to tackle negative publicity and rebuild trust, this council needs a chief executive that can be held to account by all councilors and the Mayor for the implementation of decision making, and can be open about the basis on which executive and council decisions are made.

Council recognizes that it is likely to be necessary to seek the advice of external search consultants to help find the right candidate for this important and challenging job.

This Council recognizes that in order to achieve the appointment of a candidate who is acceptable to the whole council, as required by the council's constitution, that whilst the Human resources committee should be charged with responsibility for overseeing process and of carrying out interviews, the outcome of those interviews should be reported in their totality to full council to allow the decision about appointment to be made by full council and not to be made on the recommendation of a single candidate from the Human Resources Committee process.

This Council would welcome the participation of the executive Mayor in all parts of the recruitment process, including those HR committee is responsible for. Cllr Saunders emailed the Mayor and others on the 27th August to seek a conversation about how this process can best work in collaboration between councilors and the Mayor.

Council commits to the outline timetable below, on the basis that the HR committee is empowered to adjust this timetable if necessary, but that the appointment of a chief executive should be made by April 2015 at the very latest:

A) Agree over all process – Council – 10 September 2014

- B) Progress report to HR committee on 15 September 2014
- C) Procurement of search consultancy by 7 October 2014
- D) Brief for appointment and job description to be agreed by HR committee on 22 October 2014
- E) Advert and search to be public by 7 November 2014
- F) Closing date for advert to be 15 December 2014
- G) Sift for long list to be agreed by 7 January 2015
- H) Long list report back from search consultants to be done by 31 January 2015
- I) HR committee to agree shortlist – February 2015
- J) Human Resources Committee to conduct interviews of shortlisted candidates by 24 February 2015
- K) Report on outcomes to be presented to Council on 25 February 2015 where a decision on an appointment can be made.

12.9 Motion regarding the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and persecution of religious minorities

Proposer: Councillor Alibor Choudhury

Seconder: Councillor Mahbub Alam

The Council notes:

- The UN has declared a humanitarian crisis in Northern Iraq following the advances by Islamic State (IS) militants and their persecution of Christian and other religious minorities and all those who do not comply with their brand of religious extremism.

The Council agrees:

- To condemn the persecution of Christian and other religious minorities, and all those suffering at the hands of IS (Islamic State).
- To call on the government to allow the religious persecuted to receive asylum in the UK and increase humanitarian aid to the refugees in Northern Iraq and elsewhere.
- To further promote our No Place for Hate policy to tackle hateful, religiously sectarian and all bigoted views and actions that threaten community cohesion in our borough.

12.10 Motion regarding Robin Hood Tax

Proposer: Councillor John Pierce

Seconder: Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed

Council notes that:

- Unemployment in this authority is currently unacceptably high, as a result of the economic crisis;
- Local government will see real term cuts in central grant of 28% over the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review period, meaning a cut of £6bn in annual grant by 2015;
- Extending the current FTT on shares to other asset classes such as bonds and derivatives could raise £20bn of additional revenue in the UK a year; and
- At least 11 European nations including France, Germany, Italy and Spain are moving ahead with FTTs on shares, bonds and derivatives estimated to raise £30bn a year.

Council believes that:

- Revenues from the FTT could help repair the damage caused by cuts in public services since 2010;
- Local government deserves to receive a significant proportion of FTT revenues, making an important contribution to both capital and revenue expenditure such as reversing cuts to council tax benefits; and that
- Whilst an FTT might have a negligible effect on jobs in the City of London, investing FTT revenues in a smart and progressive way would see a significant increase in employment levels in other sectors.

Council resolves that:

- The UK government should extend the current FTT on shares to other asset classes, such as bonds and derivatives.

Council further resolves to:

- Write to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Chancellor and Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government stating this council's support for extending FTTs; and
- Write to all local MPs outlining the Council's position.

12.11 Motion regarding Government cuts increasing poverty and destroying public services

Proposer: Councillor Abjol Miah

Seconder: Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah

This Council notes:

- That the People's Assembly against Austerity demonstration on June 21 in London attracted over 50,000 people and was addressed by a range of speakers including MP's Diane Abbott, Caroline Lucas and Jeremy Corbyn, Mayor Lutfur Rahman, journalist Owen Jones and comedian Russell Brand.
- That Government cuts are driving greater numbers of people into poverty. Latest research shows record levels of poverty with 1 in 3 Britons are going without three or more "basic necessities of life", such as being able to adequately feed and clothe themselves and their children, and to heat and insure their homes.
- That the Government exaggerates the size of the welfare bill and extent of benefit fraud. Benefit spending in 2011-12 accounted for 10.4% of GDP, lower than in the mid-1980s (11%) and mid -1990s (12%). In 2011/12 just 0.7% or £1bn of the benefit bill was overpaid due to fraud – compared to £70 billion lost through illegal tax evasion.
- That according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the majority of those in receipt of benefits are from working families. Low wages, the growth of part time work and the rising cost of living are forcing more people into poverty.
- The warnings of the Local Government Association that councils in England face a funding gap of £5.8 billion between March 2014 and March 2016, putting frontline public services under threat of having their funding cut.
- The Mayor's commitment to protecting residents from the impact of austerity by fighting welfare changes via policies such as the extension of free school meals, Mayor's Education Award and University grant scheme, Energy Co-op and free Homecare.
- That measures the Council has implemented to tackle child poverty are facing huge pressure as a result of the continued austerity.

This Council agrees:

- It is wrong that the poorest in our society and the public sector have been the scapegoated for an economic crisis which is the sole responsibility of bankers, the politicians in thrall to them, and a deregulated financial industry.

This Council resolves:

- To reiterate our commitment to oppose government spending cuts to local government and support the People's Assembly campaign against austerity.
- To make a commitment to fight all welfare changes that contributes to poverty.
- To ensure that our residents affected by welfare reforms have specialist support available.