

TABLED DOCUMENTS

BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2013

AMENDMENTS NOTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH BUDGET MEETING PROCEDURE RULES

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 – BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2013/14

Documents attached:

- 1. AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR CARLO GIBBS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR JOSHUA PECK (ON PINK PAPER) PLUS OFFICER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT.**
- 2. AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR DAVID SNOWDON AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ZARA DAVIS (ON BLUE PAPER) PLUS OFFICER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT.**
- 3. AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR OLIUR RAHMAN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR SHAFIQL HAQUE (ON GREEN PAPER) PLUS OFFICER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT.**
- 4. AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR RANIA KHAN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ABDUL ASAD (ON GREEN PAPER) PLUS OFFICER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT.**

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Agenda Item 5

Labour Group Budget Amendment

Proposed: Cllr Carlo Gibbs

Seconded: Cllr Joshua Peck

This council notes:

- That between the Chancellor's Emergency Budget in 2010 and 2017/18, the Council's General Fund budget will have been cut by 50%;
- The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan is showing a black hole of £39m in 2015/16, £24m of which is unfunded, and a deficit of at least £55m is anticipated in 2016/17;
- By 2015/16, Council reserves will be brought down to their lowest advisable level of £20m;
- Many of the Mayor's biggest spending commitments – including Free School Meals, THEOs, additional cleaning, Faith Buildings Fund, Educational Award and Council Tax Benefit – are only funded up to the election;
- Continuing these services after their current funding ceases would increase the council's black hole by over £6m each year;
- In order to fund additional spending, the Mayor has initiated further frontline cuts, including a 5% reduction of the staffing budgets in Adults Health and Wellbeing and Children Schools and Families directorates, placing further pressure on frontline staff;
- Closing this black hole would require the equivalent of a £600 per household Council Tax increase or cutting in half the services provided to the elderly and disabled in the Borough;
- The Labour Group has been asking the Mayor for over a year to explain how he plans to close this financial black hole over which he has presided.

This council believes:

- It is the duty of the council to manage its finances efficiently, delivering a balanced budget to ensure long term stability of services for residents;
- In facing these cuts the residents of this borough deserve openness and honesty about how those elected to represent them will deal with this issue;
- The Mayor has lost control of the Council's finances and has no proposals - such as an invest to save strategy, star chamber programme or review of service - to deal with this black hole;
- Plans to tackle the deficit will take time to bring online and, in order to be delivered in 2015, will have to be agreed by council a long time before then;
- The Mayor is failing to show leadership in the face of the Government's cuts by ignoring the council's precarious financial state until after the next election.

This council further believes:

- It is wrong for the Mayor to continue spending significant amounts of public money on self-publicity such as East End Life, political mailings to residents, banners with his face on and other communication spending;
- It is wrong for the Mayor to increase spending on his office by 65% to £700,000, including £296k for advisors, when cuts to frontline staffing budgets elsewhere in the

organisation are taking place. Particularly as he has a Cabinet that is supposed to advise him on these issues;

- It is wrong that the Mayor continues to hire a Mercedes and driver at significant cost to the council;

This council therefore resolves:

To amend the Mayor's budget:

- To delete funding of £1.214m from the budget used to fund East End Life, delivering a saving of £433k by:
 - Reducing funding available for public notices from £267,000 to £100,000, sufficient to support the provision of statutory advertising in local newspapers, tendering a long term contract in order to secure the best rates;
 - Reducing the funding of £176,000 for the advertising of choice based lettings to £50,000, sufficient to fund a provision that can be made available on a weekly basis in each housing office, leisure centre and one-stop shop in the borough, as well as online, to be managed by the lettings team;
 - To cut departmental budgets by £143,000, to reduce their general advertising spend allocated in previous years to East End Life;
- To delete the funding of £296k for Mayor's Advisors;
- Not allocate the £1.8m of unallocated funds set out in Section 3 of Cabinet Report Wednesday 13th February to any other provision;
- Use the £200,000 of available capital spending to free up £200,000 of previously capitalised revenue funding that will be ring fenced as a contingency fund to support the deletion of the budget used for East End Life.
- To ring fence the savings and unallocated funds resulting from the above and set out in the below table, into a ring-fenced reserve to support a reduction in the council's black hole in 2015/16;
- To place a general restriction on the council that all virements outside of the agreed budget framework above £200,000 must be agreed by full council.

Saving	2013/14	2014/15	Total saving
Unallocated Funding	£1.8m		£1.8m
Saving from statutory advertising	£167k	£167k	£334k
Saving from Choice Based Lettings advertising	£126k	£126k	£252k
Reduce departmental budgets (advertising spend)	£143k	£143k	£286k

Reallocation of Capital Funding	0	0	0
Mayor's Advisors	£296k	£296k	£592k
Total	£2.532m	£732k	£3.264m

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BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

General comments of the Chief Financial Officer

Subject to the financial implications of closing East End Life, which are set out in more detail below, the amendment would reduce Council expenditure in total by £3.264m over the next two financial years.

It would also reduce the Council's ongoing funding requirement by £0.443m per year.

This would result in a reduction in the unfunded gap in the 2015/16 budget from £24.173m to £20.466m. The funding gap for 2016/17, which has not yet been calculated because it lies outside the period of the current Medium Term Financial Plan, would however increase relatively, because £3.264m of the funding used to close the gap in 2015/16 is only temporary. In effect the amendment delays this much of the budget gap by one year.

In practice the unallocated funding would be allotted to reserves over the two year period 2013/14- 2014/15, not in 2013/14 as shown in the amendment. However since the funding would not be used until 2015/16, this would have no practical consequence in terms of the policy decision.

The implementation of the proposals would result in costs to the Council and these are set out in greater detail below. These costs could be justified in the medium term on the basis of invest to save. However it may also reduce the extent to which reserves would be available to offset the savings target in 2015/16.

The amendment also calls for a limit of £200,000 above which virements must be agreed by Council. Advice on this is provided below by legal officers.

General comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

The amendment calls for a limit of £200,000 above which virements must be agreed by Full Council. This matter cannot be considered at Budget Council, Procedures and regulations make it clear that Budget Council is for financial matters not constitutional matters. The Constitution requires that such changes are referred to General Purposes Committee with full officer comments in order that all parties can be consulted. It would then be referred back to Full Council at a later date.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item:

Reduce spending on advertising through East EndLife (£443,000)

Officers' comments:

The motion proposes to 'delete funding of £1.214m from the budget used to fund East End Life'. East End Life is budgeted at net nil cost with funding from both external and internal advertising – therefore there is no budgeted funding of £1.214m. However £556k of EEL's income comes from internal sources for a variety of purposes.

Statutory notices currently cost the council £267k and whilst it would be possible to purchase advertising elsewhere in a single publication with much lower circulation there is no evidence that this would cost less in the commercial sector. The East End Life Review of 2011 found that the replacement cost would be between £600k and £2.1m depending on the mix of advertising required. Other London councils including Newham, Hackney and Greenwich with a similar newspaper market have kept their council publications owing to the high cost of alternatives.

The amendment also proposes to cut departmental budgets by £143k to reduce advertising spend on East End Life. This sum is not fixed and is dependent on service requirements so would reduce the ability of services to communicate with service users and the wider community. Given the council's legal duty to promote race equality and also its duty to promote public health, reduce the fear of crime and foster social cohesion the cost of alternatives would need to be factored into the budget calculations.

East End Life is audited and reaches 83,000 households a week, with a 60% readership level, making it the most effective communications tool in the borough.

Choice based lettings advertising could be reduced as described in the proposal – however it does mean that users will need to visit the key locations on the off chance that a suitable property was available. The 2011 review found that many homeseekers found the existing service extremely valuable

and 81% of Housing Choice users who responded to the survey supported the continuation of East End Life for this purpose.

The closure of East End Life would result in the loss of £627,700 of external income and the loss of a service that reaches large numbers of borough residents and small businesses, the voluntary sector and other public sector partners.

To identify the financial and equalities impact of the proposals requires a detailed review. Closing East End Life precipitously without conducting a review of advertising/communication needs and costs would thus carry significant risk resulting in unwanted outcomes eg. higher costs and loss of engagement with residents on important community services.

This review however would not be cost free and would require officer time and possibly external support. Consideration would need to be given as to whether it represents value for money to conduct another review only two years after the July 2011 review - and potentially in advance of the government's desire to lay down further guidance or legislation in the parliamentary year 2013-14.

Closure of East End Life, including a corporate change programme and reprocurement of advertising needs would take an estimated six to eight months from the decision being taken. There may also be contract termination costs with suppliers that cannot be calculated yet.

In summary purchasing space for statutory notices, choice based lettings and departmental requirements in the commercial sector and printing separate publications would increase costs significantly if the council wished to achieve the same contact rate achieved through East End Life. There would also be procurement costs as any external advertising would have to go through a formal procurement process.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

The proposal would reduce advertising revenue to East End Life by over 35% so as the amendment anticipates, it would be likely to make East End Life unviable in its current form.

Due to the time taken involved in completing the organisational change process and a three month notice period on the contractual arrangements supporting East End Life , it would not be possible to close East End Life with

effect from 1st April and the saving may not therefore be available for a full year in 2013/14. Again this would need to be closed off from reserves.

Any redundancies required as a result of closing East End Life would need to be funded from Council reserves. The number of redundancies and therefore the cost depends upon the degree to which it is possible to redeploy staff within the Council. It is likely that the figure would be several hundred thousand pounds.

The amendment includes a proposal to create a £200,000 contingency to help manage the deletion of the budget for East End Life, which is a prudent measure in view of the implications set out above, but may not be sufficient. It is not known whether available capital resources can be used for this purpose in the manner set out in the amendment and officers would need to review this. In the event that this proved not to be possible, the £200,000 would need to be found by ring-fencing general revenue reserves.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

The Council cannot cap statutory adverts as they are a legal requirement . Any advertising placed externally would require formal procurement which would take at least 6 months . Even discretionary adverts are part of the Council's legal requirements on health and social care , education and other areas so these would all need review. There would also need to be a full EQIA on final proposals to ensure full regard is given to the equality impacts of the proposals

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item:

Delete £296,000 funding for the Mayor's advisers.

Officers' comments:

This would reduce the budget in effect to more or less the 2011/12 level when the office was originally established. The reduced amount would be enough to fund the core staff of the office. The main effect would be to delete almost all the budget for the Mayoral Advisors. This is do-able legally as they are not a statutory function, but would reduce the Mayor's capacity to respond on matters requiring policy input.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

The Mayor's office is part-funded for two years from reserves and therefore a cut would not deliver an ongoing saving.

Where employees of the Council, advisers may be entitled to severance pay on the termination of contracts and funding for this would need to be found from Council reserves.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

Mayor's advisers contracts are subject to a one month termination period.

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Conservative Budget Amendment 2013/14

Proposed By: Cllr David Snowdon

Seconded By: Cllr Zara Davis

This Council Believes That:

- 1. That the Mayor's plans to increase spending on his private office from £401,000 to £701,000 are wrong. Maintaining the office budget at last year's level will allow for greater spending on front-line services**
- 2. Eliminating the Mayor's hated stealth tax, the bulk waste collection charge, will lead to a cleaner borough, reduce clean-up costs to the council and help hard working local families**
- 3. The abolition of THEOs would allow the Council to fund more local police on the streets, while other savings would allow the restoration of a full out of hours noise service**
- 4. Tower Hamlets Council should not be providing refreshments for Councillors, and that this funding should be re-invested in local services**
- 5. Local residents are opposed to the commercialisation of our parks and open spaces, and would welcome the elimination of all targets to raise income from them.**
- 6. Libraries are an important element of Lifelong Learning, and making draconian cuts to the book fund will result in residents of the Borough receiving poorer library provision.**
- 7. Contracting an outside company to water pot plants in Tower Hamlets building is an outrageous waste of public money.**
- 8. Tower Hamlets Council is not doing enough to protect and promote our rich local heritage, which can be a driver of growth for local businesses**
- 9. Local residents would have greater opportunities if more provision was available for English language classes (ESOL). This should be financed by eliminating spending on non-statutory translation**
- 10. The government is soon to legislate for the abolition of East End Life. Acting now to close down this "newspaper" would be in the best interests of local residents.**
- 11. A 1% Council Tax rebate will follow the lead of the Mayor of London in cutting the cost of government in London, and support hard working local families**

This Council calls upon the Executive to:

1. Increase income as follows:

Description	2013/14	Notes
Events In Parks	£10,000	Generate £10,000 through private sector sponsorship of Council organised events (e.g. fireworks)
Increase Per Year	£10,000	

2. Reduce income as follows:

Description	2013/14	Notes
Commercial, corporate and private events in parks	£290,000	Remove target to generate £290k through commercial, corporate and private events in parks
Bulk waste charges	£60,000	End bulk waste charges
Reduction Per Year	£350,000	

3. Implement the following increase in spending

Description	2013/14	Notes
Police Officers	+£1,108,000	Increase funding for police officers through established Metropolitan police scheme to use funding stream created by abolition of THEOs and balancing item.
1% Council Tax Rebate	+£633,000	Provide a rebate equivalent to a 1% council tax cut to all households paying council tax
Library Book Fund	+£200,000	Reverse cuts to the Library Books fund
ESOL classes	+£152,000	Fund ESOL classes in order to further "One Tower Hamlets agenda"
Pot Hole Repair	+£120,000	Create a pothole team to visit every road in borough each year and undertake necessary repairs
Out of House Noise Nuisance Service	+£100,000	Create a new 7 days a week noise nuisance service, to reverse cuts implemented in previous years by Mayor
Docklands History Boards	+£50,000	Replace Docklands History boards located across Isle of Dogs and Limehouse Basin which were installed by LDDC and are now in a poor state of repair
Streaming of Council Meetings	+£25,000	Stream council meetings over the internet.
TfL Travel Card For Mayor	+£1,424	Provide Mayor with a zones 1-3 TfL Travel Card so that he can travel to meetings like most

		Londoners do: via London Transport. Allows abolition of Mayor's car, driver and means taxis will not be necessary.
Spending Per Year	£2,389,424	

4. Implement the following cuts to Council spending

Description	Savings in 2013/14	Notes
Existing THEO posts	£850,000	Delete all existing THEO posts, in order to fund more real police officers
Faith Buildings	£1,000,000	Delete proposed increase in faith buildings programme
Proposed 10 THEO posts	£500,000	Delete proposed THEO posts, in order to fund more real police officers
East End Life	£346,024	Abolish East End Life and instead, provide housing choices information on the Tower Hamlets website and in all One Stop Shop & RSL offices. Remove general marketing & adverts budgets, cut 10% of budget for public notices based on better design of adverts
Mayor's Executive Office	£300,000	Reverse planned increase in spending on Mayor's office. Budget reduced from £701k to £401k
Trade Union Facilities Agreement	£290,000	Review and remove full-time trade union posts
Translation of Documents	£152,000	Stop non-statutory translation of documents into foreign languages in order to promote our One Tower Hamlets objective and follow DCLG best-practice. Money to be spent on ESOL training.
Estate Agents	£75,052	Reduce discretionary bounties paid to estate agents for finding properties by 15%
Mayoral car	£49,500	Abolish the Mayoral car and delete post of full time driver. Provide Mayor with a zones 1-3 Travelcard, so that he will not need to take taxis.
Mayoral Policy Communications	£37,000	Stop Mayoral policy communications by top-slicing the budget of departments that spent £37k on Mayoral communications last year
"Media Monitoring"	£35,000	Stop media monitoring activities
Town Hall subscriptions	£27,150	End our subscription to the LGIU, Randalls Parliamentary Service, Plain English campaign and the Association for Public Service Excellence; submit notice to LGA to end subscription.
Watering of Pot Plants	£22,000	End budget for contractors to water pot plants; instead encourage staff to water the pot plants next to their desk in the Council Offices
External venues	£16,000	Stop hiring out external venues for internal Council meetings and away-days

Newspaper Subscriptions	£12,000	Cut Town Hall subscriptions
TV Advertising	£9,500	Top-slice the budget of departments that spent £9.5k on TV advertising last year
Refreshments at Town Hall meetings	£5,500	End refreshments at Council meetings
Taxis for Mayor, Speaker and Cllrs	£3,500	Remove the budget for taxis for the Mayor, Speaker and Councillors
Travel Allowance For Senior Council Execs	0	Stop offering this perk to newly employed Senior Council officers at £3,500 each
Savings per year	£3,730,226	

5. Create Ring-Fenced Reserve

Description	Increase in 2013/14	Notes
16-18 Education Ring Fenced Reserve	£1,000,000	Create a "Ring Fenced" Reserve for education spending within Tower Hamlets to improve attainment of 16-18 year olds

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

General comments of the Chief Financial Officer

The proposals balance, with the items that increase expenditure and reduce income equalling those that reduce expenditure and increase income.

A number of proposals involve expenditure mainly in the form of staff severance costs in order to reduce costs and these would need to be met from Council reserves and contingencies. The exact amounts would depend upon the extent to which it was possible to redeploy staff.

Some proposals would also be subject to the Councils organisational change procedure and so would not be implementable from 1st April. In these cases, expenditure on new growth would not be able to start until the change process had been completed.

More details are provided in the detailed comments.

General comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

None. Specific comments are provided for relevant proposals.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Events in Parks

Generate £10,000 through private sector sponsorship of Council organised events.

Officers' comments:

Officers would endeavour to generate this income.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

This amendment should be considered alongside the proposal to reduce commercial income by £290,000

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Commercial, corporate and private events in parks

Remove income target to generate £290,000 through commercial, corporate and private events in parks

Officers' comments:

The income target for parks from commercial use currently stands at £460k this includes £90k for corporate and private events and £100k contribution towards the Victoria Park Business Plan which is an HLF requirement.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

The contract with HLF does require the Council to contribute towards the Victoria Park business plan and should it fail to do so, the HLF can require repayment of the grant.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Bulk Waste Charges

End bulk waste charges. £60,000 reduction in income

Officers' comments:

The loss of income would be £60,000.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

There is clear potential for demand for the service to increase as a result of abolishing the charge which could add to the costs of the service, including landfill and waste disposal charges.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Police Officers

Increase funding by £1,108,000 for Police Officers through established Metropolitan police scheme to use funding stream created by abolition of THEOs.

Officers' comments:

This item needs to be read alongside the proposal to delete funding for THEOs in order to provide funding for police officers.

There are 16 accredited (empowered) THEO posts. Total £850k pa.

With regard to non accredited THEOs (markets), there are 14 permanent posts, approx total £582k pa.

There are also 4 part time FTC posts at total of £87.3k pa.

In total therefore, £1.520m is currently budgeted for the THEOs service (before the Mayor's additional allocation for next year). Of this £670,000 is charged to the Street Trading Account is therefore not available as a General Fund saving, leaving £850,000 in a full year from savings through deleting the THEOs service.

In addition there is a balancing figure available because the savings and income creation proposals in amendment exceed other growth and income reduction proposals by £258,000.

The Council and the Police work in partnership to deal with a variety of concerns regarding crime and ASB. The introduction of the THEOs is a practical example of this partnership in action. The THEOs are a civil enforcement team who have been accredited by the Metropolitan Police Service, to deal with certain types of ASB. The council has a legal obligation to undertake a variety of enforcement and investigations functions in addition to the police. The THEOs are a generic service which enables the council to effectively deal with a of enforcement functions.

The police introduced the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme because they realise that the increasing demands and expectation of the public with regards to ASB continues to rise, the reality is that this will only continue. The police support the development of the accreditation scheme because this provides an opportunity for additional street based enforcement officers to deal with ASB concerns without placing additional demand on police resources.

The THEOs compliment the work of the police and SNTs, they are empowered by the police and council to respond to the low spectrum of concerns which we know affect the community, issues which the police are unable to deal with due to more serious demands or are not strategic police priorities.

The introduction of the THEOs has been able to demonstrate this very well. For example prior to the introduction of the THEOs, the issue of street drinking by vagrants was a real concern for the community of Whitechapel. Despite consistent request by the community for the local police SNT to respond, they were unable to do so effectively because they had to manage competing demands. The THEOs were able to be tasked to the area, undertake patrol, effective enforcement and supportive intervention; the result being a significant improvement with a 97% reduction in calls to the police, which reduced the pressure on call demand for the police and enable the resources to be redirected to other priorities.

The THEOs are council staff which offers much greater flexibility and responsiveness in dealing with issues reported to by the community. Unlike police officers, the staff are able to undertake patrols and have a visible presence within the community. They are not pulled away to be redirected to provide additional resources to pan London concerns, arrests, court appearances etc.

The councils CCTV system is an excellent tool in dealing with crime and ASB concerns, however it is only as effective as the response provided. Experience has shown that due to other priorities, it is often the case that the police are unable to respond to incidents happening and captured on CCTV; resulting in the suspects not being caught. However because the THEOs are council staff, they are available, are directed to respond and are able to deal with the incidents appropriately.

It is a fact that the police will hardly ever deal with matters related to dog fouling, litter, fly-tipping etc. The officers are likely to be distracted or redeployed to more pressing matters. The THEOs however are able to deal such issues, providing a visible and timely intervention.

The council currently funds additional police officers schemes, which although effective are often redirected to other strategic policing priorities. The council is unable to have command and control decision making and is limited in its ability to scrutinise performance.

The response to crime and ASB concerns will continue to require a flexible approach. The effective partnership between the council and the police which has introduced the THEOs recognises the value the CSAS officers provide. To consider removing this option would be a serious error and would not advance success of either the council or the police in dealing with crime and ASB. It is now the case that several London Boroughs have sought to replicate our model.

The cost of laying off our own staff and replacing them with Metropolitan Police officers would need to be taken into account in any proposals.

In addition the THEOs currently provide the Out of Hours Noise Service which would need to be reprovided.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

This proposal is linked to a proposal to delete all existing THEO posts. Such a proposal would be likely to result in redundancy and would be subject to the Council's organisational change procedure. The start date for additional police officers would therefore need to await the conclusion of this process.

Any redundancy payments to THEOs would need to be met from Council reserves set aside for the purpose. This would be substantial cost in view of the numbers of staff involved but the exact amount would depend upon the number of deployments that were achieved.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: 1% Council Tax Rebate

Provide a rebate equivalent to a 1% council tax cut to all households paying council tax £633,000

Officers' comments:

The rebate could be arranged under powers provided by the Local Government Act 1992. The rebate would not reduce the rate of Council Tax but would provide funding from Council budgets to provide a one-off rebate to all Council Tax payers equivalent to 1% of their bill, net of discounts.

A rationale for a rebate at this time would be to alleviate the impact of Council Tax on residents during harsh economic times.

A permanent reduction in Council Tax would not be prudent given the budget gap facing the Council in 2015/16, but this scheme would be temporary.

Each year the Government sets rules that prevent increases in Council Tax which the Secretary of State deems excessive. The rules for 2014/15 have not yet been set.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

Relevant comments are set out above

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Library Book Fund

Reverse cuts to the Library Books Fund £200,000

Officers' comments:

It is within the Council's powers to increase spending on the Book Fund.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: ESOL Classes

Fund ESOL classes in order to further "One Tower Hamlets Agenda"
£152,000

Officers' comments:

This proposal needs to be seen alongside the proposal to reduce spending on translation services.

Last year the service received one-off ESOL funding (£175k) which was used to develop and run pilot courses for people who has ESOL need but for whom courses previously on offer were not suitable, plus it was used to develop the third sector to deliver these and other ESOL courses. As a result 850 people on the waiting list for suitable classes were accommodated.

Idea Store Learning is currently working with 31 voluntary organisations to submit a consortium bid for a Govt grant for CBEL (Community Based English Language) to help continue the work begun with the pilot schemes . However only six of these grants will be given nationally and one in London.

Should the additional funding be made available it will be invested into the on-going programme to embed ESOL in across a wide range of adult learning, support more classes and quality improvement in teaching working with third sector providers.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

An equalities impact assessment would be required before implementing this proposal.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Pot Hole Repair

Create a pothole team to visit every road in borough each year and undertake necessary repairs £120,000

Officers' comments:

This will increase resources for dealing with pot holes

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Out of Hours Noise Nuisance Service

Create a new 7 days a week noise nuisance service, to reverse cuts implemented in previous years by Mayor £100,000 increase

Officers' comments:

Additional Financial comments (if any)

Reprovision of the Out of Hours Noise Service is necessary if the THEO service is discontinued.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Docklands History Boards

Replace Docklands History Boards located across Isle of Dogs and Limehouse Basin which were installed by LDDC and are now in a poor state of repair £50,000 increase

Officers' comments:

This sum would be used to work in partnership with landowners to renovate and maintain Heritage Boards

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Streaming of Council Meetings

Stream Council meetings over the internet increase £25,000

Officers' comments:

This would cost from £25k p.a., representing the cost of a webcasting service/equipment leasing contract. There are a number of possible providers. Lead-in time would be approx. 2 months for installation/training etc.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: TfL Travel Card for Mayor

Provide Mayor with a Zones 1-3 TfL Travel Card so that he can travel to meetings like most Londoners do: via London Transport allows abolition of Mayor's car, driver and means taxis will not be necessary increase £1,424

Officers' comments:

This could be provided.

The proposal needs to be seen in the context of the proposal to remove funding for the Mayor's car and driver.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Existing THEO posts

Delete all existing THEO posts, in order to fund more real police officers £850,000 saving to the General Fund.

Officers' comments:

This item needs to be read alongside the proposal to provide additional police officers by using the funding released by abolishing the THEO service.

There are 16 accredited (empowered) THEO posts. Total £850k pa.

With regard to non accredited THEOs (markets), there are 14 permanent posts, approx total £582k pa.

There are also 4 part time FTC posts at total of £87.3k pa.

In total therefore, £1.520m is currently budgeted for the service (before the Mayor's additional allocation for next year). Of this £850,000 is charged directly to the General Fund and the balance to the Street Trading Account.

The Council and the Police work in partnership to deal with a variety of concerns regarding crime and ASB. The introduction of the THEOs is a practical example of this partnership in action. The THEOs are a civil enforcement team who have been accredited by the Metropolitan Police Service, to deal with certain types of ASB. The council has a legal obligation to undertake a variety of enforcement and investigations functions in addition to the police. The THEOs are a generic service which enables the council to effectively deal with a of enforcement functions.

The police introduced the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme because they realise that the increasing demands and expectation of the public with regards to ASB continues to rise, the reality is that this will only continue. The police support the development of the accreditation scheme because this provides an opportunity for additional street based enforcement officers to deal with ASB concerns without placing additional demand on police resources.

The THEOs compliment the work of the police and SNTs, they are empowered by the police and council to respond to the low spectrum of concerns which we know affect the community, issues which the police are unable to deal with due to more serious demands or are not strategic police priorities.

The introduction of the THEOs has been able to demonstrate this very well. For example prior to the introduction of the THEOs, the issue of street drinking by vagrants was a real concern for the community of Whitechapel. Despite consistent request by the community for the local police SNT to respond, they were unable to do so effectively because they had to manage competing demands. The THEOs were able to be tasked to the area, undertake patrol, effective enforcement and supportive intervention; the result being a significant improvement with a 97% reduction in calls to the police, which reduced the pressure on call demand for the police and enable the resources to be redirected to other priorities.

The THEOs are council staff which offers much greater flexibility and responsiveness in dealing with issues reported to by the community. Unlike police officers, the staff are able to undertake patrols and have a visible presence within the community. They are not pulled away to be redirected to provide additional resources to pan London concerns, arrests, court appearances etc.

The councils CCTV system is an excellent tool in dealing with crime and ASB concerns, however it is only as effective as the response provided. Experience has shown that due to other priorities, it is often the case that the police are unable to respond to incidents happening and captured on CCTV; resulting in the suspects not being caught. However because the THEOs are council staff, they are available, are directed to respond and are able to deal with the incidents appropriately.

It is a fact that the police will hardly ever deal with matters related to dog fouling, litter, fly-tipping etc. The officers are likely to be distracted or redeployed to more pressing matters. The THEOs however are able to deal such issues, providing a visible and timely intervention.

The council currently funds additional police officers schemes, which although effective are often redirected to other strategic policing priorities. The council is unable to have command and control decision making and is limited in its ability to scrutinise performance.

The response to crime and ASB concerns will continue to require a flexible approach. The effective partnership between the council and the police which has introduced the THEOs recognises the value the CSAS officers provide. To consider removing this option would be a serious error and would not advance success of either the council or the police in dealing with crime and ASB. It is now the case that several London Boroughs have sought to replicate our model.

The cost of laying off our own staff and replacing them with Metropolitan Police officers would need to be taken into account in any proposals. This is likely to be substantial because of the number of officers involved (the maximum figure would be likely to exceed £1m) , but the exact amount would depend upon the number of redeployments achieved. Funding for this would need to come from Council reserves and contingencies.

In addition the THEOs currently provide the Out of Hours Noise Service which would need to be reprovided.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

The proposal would be likely to result in redundancy and would be subject to the Council's organisational change procedure. The start date for additional police officers would therefore need to await the conclusion of this process.

Any redundancy payments to THEOs would need to be met from Council reserves set aside for the purpose.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

The Council would have to follow its procedures for termination of contracts of employment including consultation.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Faith Buildings

Delete Proposed increase in faith buildings programme £1,000,000 saving

Officers' comments:

This would reduce the funding available for grant support to faith buildings which would henceforth be restricted only to providing capital grants.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

£1,000,000 of the faith buildings programme is currently met from the revenue budget; the balance of the Mayor's proposal is to be funded from capital. In order to reduce the revenue budget as intended by this amendment, the funding for the revenue grants programme would be discontinued.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Proposed 10 THEO posts

Delete proposed THEO posts, in order to fund more real police officers
£500,000 saving

Officers' comments:

This would delete the Mayor's amendment to provide temporarily for additional THEO posts for the next two years.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

Since the Mayor's proposal is only funded for the next two years, deleting it would also only provide additional resources for two years.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: East End Life

Abolish East End Life and instead, provide housing choices information on the Tower Hamlets website and in all One Stop Shop & RSL offices. Remove general marketing & adverts budgets, cut 10% of budget for public notices based on better design of adverts £346,024 saving

Officers' comments:

The motion proposes to 'delete funding of £1.214m from the budget used to fund East End Life'. East End Life is budgeted at net nil cost with funding from both external and internal advertising – therefore there is no budgeted funding of £1.214m. However £556k of EEL's income comes from internal sources for a variety of purposes.

Statutory notices currently cost the council £267k and whilst it would be possible to purchase advertising elsewhere in a single publication with much lower circulation there is no evidence that this would cost less in the commercial sector. The East End Life Review of 2011 found that the replacement cost would be between £600k and £2.1m depending on the mix of advertising required. Other London councils including Newham, Hackney and Greenwich with a similar newspaper market have kept their council publications owing to the high cost of alternatives.

The amendment also proposes to cut departmental budgets by £143k to reduce advertising spend on East End Life. This sum is not fixed and is dependent on service requirements so would reduce the ability of services to communicate with service users and the wider community. Given the council's legal duty to promote race equality and also its duty to promote public health, reduce the fear of crime and foster social cohesion the cost of alternatives would need to be factored into the budget calculations.

East End Life is audited and reaches 83,000 households a week, with a 60% readership level, making it the most effective communications tool in the borough.

Choice based lettings advertising could be reduced as described in the proposal – however it does mean that users will need to visit the key locations on the off chance that a suitable property was available. The 2011 review

found that many homeseekers found the existing service extremely valuable and 81% of Housing Choice users who responded to the survey supported the continuation of East End Life for this purpose.

The closure of East End Life would result in the loss of £627,700 of external income and the loss of a service that reaches large numbers of borough residents and small businesses, the voluntary sector and other public sector partners.

To identify the financial and equalities impact of the proposals requires a detailed review. Closing East End Life precipitously without conducting a review of advertising/communication needs and costs would thus carry significant risk resulting in unwanted outcomes eg. higher costs and loss of engagement with residents on important community services.

This review however would not be cost free and would require officer time and possibly external support. Consideration would need to be given as to whether it represents value for money to conduct another review only two years after the July 2011 review - and potentially in advance of the government's desire to lay down further guidance or legislation in the parliamentary year 2013-14.

Closure of East End Life, including a corporate change programme and reprocurement of advertising needs would take an estimated six to eight months from the decision being taken. There may be contract termination costs with suppliers that cannot be calculated yet.

In summary purchasing space for statutory notices, choice based lettings and departmental requirements in the commercial sector and printing separate publications would increase costs significantly if the council wished to achieve the same contact rate achieved through East End Life. There would also be procurement costs as any external advertising would have to go through a formal procurement process.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

The proposal would reduce advertising revenue to East End Life by nearly 30% so as the amendment anticipates, it would be likely to make East End Life unviable in its current form.

Due to the time involved in completing the organisational change process and a three month notice period on the contractual arrangements supporting East End Life , it would not be possible to close East End Life with effect from 1st

April and the saving may not therefore be available for a full year in 2013/14. Again this would need to be closed off from reserves.

Any redundancies required as a result of closing East End Life would need to be funded from Council reserves. The number of redundancies and therefore the cost depends upon the degree to which it is possible to redeploy staff within the Council. It is likely that the figure would be several hundred thousand pounds.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

The Council cannot cap statutory adverts as they are a legal requirement. Any advertising placed externally would, by law, require a formal procurement which would take at least 6 months . Even discretionary adverts are part of the Council's legal requirements on health and social care, education and other areas so they would all need review. In addition a full EQIA on the final proposals would be required to take account of effect of the proposals on equalities issues

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Mayors Executive Office

Reduce spending on Mayor's office by £300,000

Officers' comments:

This would reduce the budget from £701k to £401k p.a. – in effect reverting more or less to the 2011/12 level when the office was originally established. The reduced amount would be enough to fund the core staff of the office. The main effect would be to delete almost all the budget for the Mayoral Advisors. This is do-able legally as they are not a statutory function, but would reduce the Mayor's capacity to respond on matters requiring policy input.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

The Mayor's office is part-funded for two years from reserves and therefore a cut would not deliver an ongoing saving.

Any employees affected by this proposal would be subject to the Council's organisational change protocol and may be entitled to severance payments.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

The Mayor's advisers contracts have a notice period of one month for termination.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Trade Union Facilities Agreement

Review and remove full-time trade union posts £290,000 Saving

Officers' comments:

The current costs of salaries under the Trade Union Facilities' Agreement is approximately £290,000.

There is a statutory entitlement to time off for trade union duties, training and activities. This entitlement is set out in the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. The ACAS(Advisory, Consolidation and Arbitration Service) Code of Practice on time off for trade union duties, training and activities provides employers with guidance and advice on how to meet their statutory responsibilities.

Union representatives undertake a variety of roles in collective bargaining and in working with management, communicating with union members, liaising with their trade union and in handling individual disciplinary and grievance matters on behalf of employees. There are positive benefits for employers, employees and for union members in encouraging the efficient performance of union representatives' work, for example in aiding the resolution of problems and conflicts at work. The role can be both demanding and complex. In order to perform effectively union representatives need to have reasonable paid time off from their normal job in appropriate circumstances

Should the council move away from its current arrangements then new arrangements would need to be put in place in compliance with statutory responsibilities. Any new agreement would need to be re-negotiated with the Trade Unions. As an employer the council has a legal requirement to consult with trade unions during periods of change and employees have a statutory right to representation and accompaniment at meetings. If we do not have these arrangements in place then it will prevent timely progress of consultation and implementation of change processes and also slow down the progress of case work and will impact on employee relations.

Should there be no TU facilities agreement then every time trade union duties, training or activities were carried out they would need to be assessed and a determination made as to whether they should be paid or not. Such an

arrangement would be an administrative nightmare and not conducive to good employee relations

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Translation of Documents

Stop non-statutory translation of documents into foreign languages in order to promote our One Tower Hamlets objective and follow DCLG best-practice.
Money to be spent on ESOL training £152,000 Saving

Officers' comments:

This proposal needs to be seen in the context of proposals to use this money to increase provision of ESOL courses.

In 2011/12 spending on translation services broke down as follows;

Adults, Health and Wellbeing		£23,000
Children, Schools and Families		£107,000
Communities, Localities & Culture		£10,000
Development & Renewal		£4,000
Resources		£8,000
Chief Executive's	less than	£1,000
Total		£152,000

It is unrealistic to expect that every person affected by Council services will be an English speaker. It is therefore highly unlikely that the Council could completely eliminate the requirement to translate documents and conversations for the benefit, for example, of non-English speaking members of the public who are affected by social care issues. These costs where necessary would need to be met from other Directorate budgets.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

An equalities impact assessment would be necessary before this proposals could be implemented.



BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Estate Agents

Reduce discretionary bounties paid to estate agents for finding properties by 15% £75,052 saving

Officers' comments:

The incentives the Council offers are in order to provide a viable alternative to the making of a homeless application. That said, in the current property market climate, such incentives are not being as successful in attracting properties this year when compared to last and so any reductions would serve to compound this, leading to increased homelessness and all the financial burdens associated with that.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Mayoral Car

Abolish the Mayoral car and delete post of full time driver. Provide Mayor with a zones 1-3 Travelcard, so that he will not need to take taxis.

Officers' comments:

The cost of the car and chauffeur is £49,500 a year.

This proposal needs to be seen in the context of the proposal to provide a Zone 1-3 travelcard for the Mayor's use.

In practice deletion of the car & driver will probably necessitate use of taxis which will reduce the amount saved.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

Termination costs of the lease on the Mayor's car would need to be considered.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Mayoral Policy Communications

Stop Mayoral policy communications by top-slicing the budget of departments that spent £37k on Mayoral communications last year

Officers' comments:

There is no budget for these communications which are arranged on an ad hoc basis at the behest of Directorates and funded from within Directorate budgets. The high profile example during 2012, which related to the Council Tax Support Scheme, cost £37,000 and was funded from earmarked reserves.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

Since there is no budget for this item, a reduction of this amount would need to be found from within Directorates budgets by reducing general expenditure.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

Any such publications would have to conform to the recommended Code of Practice on Publicity.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: "Media Monitoring"

Stop media monitoring activities £35,000 saving

Officers' comments:

The authority currently spends around £35,000 a year on media monitoring, the purpose of which is to ensure that the Council is aware of media coverage affecting it (of which there has been a great deal) and is able to respond in a timely fashion and to avoid the considerably greater cost of having officers undertake the work manually and by purchasing a vast array of publications. Officers have been looking at a way for this to be provided more cheaply and a saving of £5,000 will be pursued through a procurement process during the next financial year.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Town Hall Subscriptions

End our subscription to the LGIU, Randalls Parliamentary Service, Plain English campaign and the Association for Public Service Excellence; submit notice to LGA to end subscription £27,150 saving

Officers' comments:

This would reduce the Council's access to policy briefings, relevant information and networking events.

Tower Hamlets would be one of a few authorities that had resigned from the LGA. The LGA is the main representative body for local government in England which engages with Government and opinion formers to lobby for the interests of local authorities. Whilst Tower Hamlets would continue to benefit from this lobbying effort, the loss of the subscription would reduce the LGA's capacity to do this work.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Watering of Pot Plants

End budget for contractors to water pot plants; instead encourage staff to water the pot plants next to their desk in the Council offices £22,000 saving

Officers' comments:

The budget for maintaining pot plants is £22,000 a year.

Plants are important for 2 reasons, (a) there is a view that where there is a high level of technology they help take out CO2 from the environment; (b) as a public building and the face of the Council we do need to retain a certain standard and appearance of the building.

There is a risk that relying on the tender loving care of busy Council staff, who are not horticultural experts, for their wellbeing would be seriously detrimental to the life chances of the plants.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

There could be termination costs involved in an early termination of the contract.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: External Venues

Stop hiring out external venues for internal Council meetings and away-days
£16,000 Saving

Officers' comments:

Council spending on the use of external venues for meetings and conferences has been recorded at £16,000 in each of the last two financial years. It may be that the demand for external hire will increase now that the Town Hall is being used more intensively as office accommodation.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Newspaper Subscriptions

Cut Town Hall newspaper subscriptions £12,000 Saving

Officers' comments:

This could be achieved in light of the fact that much of the same material provided by newspapers is freely available online.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: TV Advertising

Top-slice the budget of departments that spent £9.5k on TV advertising last year

Officers' comments:

The Council spent £9,500 on TV advertising in 2011/12. There is no dedicated budget for this form of advertising, however, and decisions are made on an ad hoc basis and funded by Directorates when a need is identified.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

There is no budget for this expenditure so savings would need to be found from within Directorate budgets by reducing other items.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Refreshments at Town Hall Meetings

End refreshments at Council meetings £5,500 Saving

Officers' comments:

The refreshments budget was already cut by approx. 80% back in 2010 and refreshments for most meetings were deleted or reduced to tea, coffee & biscuits at that time. This saving would eliminate the remaining budget.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Taxis for Mayor, Speaker and Cllrs

Remove the budget for taxis for the Mayor, Speaker and Councillors £3,500
Saving

Officers' comments:

Usage of taxis is now limited to occasions where a member (in practice usually a Cabinet Member) needs urgently to get to or from an engagement and public transport is either not available or is impractical (e.g. because of the speed required) or inappropriate (e.g. late at night). Neither the Mayor nor the Speaker now make use of any taxis as an official car is provided for each position

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: Travel Allowance for Senior Council Execs

Stop offering this perk to newly employed Senior Council Officers at £3,500 each

Officers' comments:

This could be achieved by altering the terms on which Chief Officers are engaged.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

No saving has been put forward against this item.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item: 16-18 Education Ring Fenced Reserve

Create a "Ring-Fenced" Reserve for education spending within Tower Hamlets to improve attainment of 16-18 year olds £1,000,000 increase

Officers' comments:

Post 16 education remains a priority area for improvement in the borough. In the 2011/12 academic year, the A-Level average point score per pupil was 622.3, below the previous year's score of 642.4. Our performance continues to be below the national average, currently 754.4. Overall, 48.7% of 16-18 year olds in the borough are achieving three or more A Levels, again this falls below the national average of 56.7%. Achievement of level 3 qualifications (A Level or equivalent) by the age of 19 is also below national average.

The proportion of young people aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance has increased since 2008 and was 10.3% in 2012. Although this is indicative of the wider economic and employment situation nationally, it means even greater efforts are needed to ensure that young people receive high quality educational provision in order to maximise their potential.

We already have in place a number of initiatives under our 'aim higher' programme, funded until the end of the current academic year. These include academic mentoring, university links, university mentoring, masterclasses, Oxbridge activities, thinking skills and enhancement activities to broaden student profiles for CVs for University application. We are also providing one to one careers interviews for all year 11 students. In addition, the Mayor's Education Allowance is helping to encourage more young people to remain in education after 16. The allocation of further funding to support work in this area would enable us to sustain the existing Aim Higher programme (cost £260k per year) and expand the work, for example doubling the existing one to one careers interviews (cost £160k per year). It would also allow for expanding careers advice into years 12 and 13 to improve support for students in making appropriate choices post 18.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING – 27th FEBRUARY 2013

Independent Amendment

Proposer: Cllr Oliur Rahman

Seconder: Cllr Shafiqul Haque

This Council Notes:

1. The report from the University and College Union that Bethnal Green and Bow constituency has the highest number of people without formal qualifications in the country.
2. The report from the Campaign to End Child Poverty that Tower Hamlets continues to have among the highest levels of child poverty in the county.
3. The progress made over the last decade in the borough to increase the numbers of people with formal qualifications and reduce levels of child poverty. The recent census information shows a decrease in the proportion of people without any formal qualifications from 35% in 2001 to 20% in 2011. The current figure of 42% of children living in poverty is a decline from 53% in 2009 and 60% 2006.

This Council Agrees:

1. Government cuts threaten to roll back these advances:
 - Instead of improving access to education for poorer communities, the government is restricting it. They have slashed the education maintenance allowance, increased tuition fees, and replaced financial support for adult learners with prohibitive loans.
 - Instead of lifting people out of poverty, government welfare reform threatens to place more families to poverty. The DWP have identified thousands of households in Tower Hamlets that will be affected by welfare reform, not just large families or the workless, these are families living on low incomes. The average reduction will be £101 a week. 37% will lose more than £100 a week. 30% will lose between £50-10 a week.

This Council Notes the following resource implications:

1. The Council currently has a healthy level of reserves, expected to be £32,897,000 in March this year.

This Council Believes:

1. That the requirement to maintain a healthy level of reserves to meet current and future risks must be balanced responsibly with the needs of Tower Hamlets residents and the opportunity to invest in the borough's future.

This Council Resolves:

1. To allocate the one-off funding in the following areas allocated from funding already set aside in the budget for third sector grants :

This Council Resolves:

1. To extend provision in the borough for those without formal qualifications and effected by welfare cuts by committing £65,000 to the establishment the new Unite Community Centre in St George's Town Hall.
2. This is a partnership between the council, Unite - Europe's largest trade union and Barclay's Bank.
3. The Unite Community Centre will offer:
 - Education courses, employment and welfare advice services and community events.
 - It will run three Skills for Life courses a week, and each will hold three sessions a week.
 - Over the course of the year it aims to have 300 learners take Skills for Life courses.
 - Based on this, and the provision of non-accredited ESOL, art and photography courses, and cultural events, the centre expects 50 unique visitors a week.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY CLLR OLIUR RAHMAN

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item:

Establishment of the Unite Community Centre (£65,000)

Officers' comments:

The project will be subject to the standard grant agreement used for Mainstream Grants. This process will ensure that the council verifies a value for money project aligned to the strategic objectives of One Tower Hamlets.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

This proposal can be funded on a one-off basis from resources already in the budget in relation to third sector grants.

Additional Legal comments (if any)

An EQIA should be carried out on this proposal to ensure equalities issues are identified and monitored in the grant agreement

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Budget Council Meeting – 27th February 2013

Independent Amendment

Proposer: Cllr Rania Khan
Seconder: Cllr Abdul Asad

This Council notes the progressive budget proposals from Mayor Rahman and his administration, which will see:

1. A borough we can be proud of and which is environmentally friendly; including ten new THEOs, a potholes squad, new cycling infrastructure, a new Burial Ground, £1m further investment into our Faith Buildings and £800,000 on a borough wide deep clean.
2. Investment in our young people; continuing our MEA scheme, providing 400 Mayor's University Grants and free school meals for all children in reception and year one for the next two years.
3. Bringing investment into key areas of the borough; bringing improvements into and promoting Roman Road, Burdett Road, Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Market.
4. Keeping more money into residents' pockets; freezing council tax and fees and charges and maintaining council tax benefit and creating a £1m Preventing Homelessness Fund.

This Council notes the following in relation to the borough's rich heritage and culture:

1. Tower Hamlets has an exceptionally rich history which has been shaped by the different people who have lived and worked here; the movements that started here and have grown to be national and global forces for changes; our links to royalty; and our role as the economic powerhouse of London and the country.
2. Tower Hamlets is currently facing the fastest pace of change and development in the country. This development is creating jobs, new houses and a borough fit for the future.
3. In light of this new development, there is a commitment from both residents and the administration of the borough to ensure that the history and heritage of the borough is preserved and celebrated.
4. That Cultural Industries are one of the fastest growth areas in the borough, with currently over 30,000 jobs in cultural and creative industries in Tower Hamlets.
5. The Enterprise Strategy identified the importance of cultural industries for the borough's economic future.

This Council notes the following central government cuts to culture and heritage:

1. The Suspension of English Heritage's Blue Plaque scheme in January 2013, due cuts in government funding. The scheme is being wound down, with only approved plaques being installed and no new suggestions from the public being taken.

2. The sustained funding reductions from central government sources towards arts and cultural activities, including the 30% reduction in funding to the Arts Council; the scrapping of the UK Film Council and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council; and the collective impact of reduced funding availability on the ability for cultural services to continue to run.

This Council notes the following in regards to the borough's disabled and elderly residents and the third sector:

1. Tower Hamlets has a larger number of residents receiving disability benefits and with limiting long term conditions than the national average.
2. Disabled residents are more likely to live in poverty and to suffer from social isolation.
3. Tower Hamlets has a young population, however 6.1% of the population are aged 65, of which we have the highest proportion of older residents living alone and an above average level of pensioner poverty.
4. The Council continues to provide a wide range of services to disabled and elderly residents and this administrations' commitment to free home care, makes Tower Hamlets the only council in the country to offer free home care.
5. Tower Hamlets has a thriving third sector, with between 2,000 and 3,000 organisations working in the borough. They provide a range of vital services, including delivery against our own Community Plan targets. The important role they play has been recognised by this administration who has increased investment in the Mainstream Grants to £8m.

This Council notes the following central government reforms:

1. The reduction in government support to older residents and disabled residents, including the change from RPI to CPI in pension uplift; the change in disability support from Disability Living Allowance onto Employment Support Allowance or Jobseekers Allowance and the transition from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments, which will result in fewer residents receiving levels of support and those in receipt of benefits receiving less. This is in conjunction with rising food and energy bills which impact the hardest on those on fixed low incomes.
2. That the rhetoric of the Big Society which suggested an enhanced role for the third sector has been undermined by the funding cuts from central government have resulted in reduced ability for the third sector to provide services and have resulted in the third sector feeling marginalised and under-recognised.

This Council Notes the following resource implications:

1. The Council currently has a healthy level of reserves, expected to be £32,897,000 in March this year.

This Council Believes:

1. That the requirement to maintain a healthy level of reserves to meet current and future risks must be balanced responsibly with the needs of Tower Hamlets residents and the opportunity to invest in the borough's future.

This Council Resolves:

1. To allocate the one-off funding in the following areas allocated from funding available from additional savings identified during the budget process and set out in the budget papers :

In relation to celebrating our older and disabled residents and the excellent work of our third sector:

Allocate £150k for 3 events to celebrate the achievements and contributions made by older residents in Tower Hamlets, disabled residents in Tower Hamlets and the third sector.

- A Disability Day to further promote disabled residents' dignity and wellbeing, which will be a celebration of disabled residents as well as provide information about support services and welfare advice.
- An Older People's Day to celebrate the contributions older residents have made and continue to make in the borough as well as an opportunity to provide information about support services, activity and leisure opportunities.
- A Third Sector Celebration to promote the excellent work and achievements of our third sector.

In relation to celebrating our heritage and history

Allocate a one-off sum of £4,000 to create a Tower Hamlets People's History Plaque Scheme.

- This will ensure we are able to commemorate our unique history and heritage.

In relation to helping our young people into the creative industries

Allocate £125k to create 10 part time apprenticeships in local creative industries.

- This will enable young people in Tower Hamlets to gain valuable experience in the huge range of cultural industries in the borough.

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BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY CLLR RANIA KHAN

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

General comments of the Chief Financial Officer

The proposals total £279,000 on a one-off basis and can be funded from unallocated resources identified through additional savings identified during the budget process.

General comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY CLLR RANIA KHAN

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item:

Events celebrating our older and disabled residents and the work of the third sector (£150,000)

Officers' comments:

In relation to celebrating older and disabled resident's contributions, this supports our community leadership role in tackling the perceptions of local people where this may lead to discrimination, harassment or hate crime. It is advisable to link any new initiatives with events already planned in relation to achieving One Tower Hamlets, specifically in relation to International Day for Disabled People on 3rd December, local annual events for International Day of Older People (October) and World Mental Health Day (October). There are also on-going events or one-off events – e.g. a Bangladeshi Mental Health Awareness day on 6th March.

In addition, it is advisable to link any new events into tackling specific issues for example the Time to Change Pledge in relation to mental health and also hate crime against people with a learning disability, which we know impacts on people's ability to take part in everyday community life, including employment.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

This proposal would be subject to an EqlA prior to implementation.

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY CLLR RANIA KHAN

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item:

People's History Plaque Scheme (£4,000)

Officers' comments:

None

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

None

BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY CLLR RANIA KHAN

OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Item:

Part time apprenticeships in creative industries (£125,000)

Officers' comments:

This would effectively mean 10 (1 year) apprenticeships funded at London Living Wage for 24 hours per week plus £9k management costs. An apprenticeship has appropriate training programme attached to it and therefore will need adequate time to complete the required level of qualification which makes it an apprenticeship.

Additional Financial comments (if any)

None

Additional Legal comments (if any)

A fair and transparent process for recruitment would be required.

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