



Meeting of the

# TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL

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Wednesday, 25 June 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

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## A G E N D A

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### VENUE

Council Chamber, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Town Hall, Mulberry Place,  
5 Clove Crescent,  
London E14 2BG

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact:

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**TO THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER  
HAMLETS**

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to be held in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG** at **7.30 p.m.** on **WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2008**

Martin Smith  
**Chief Executive**

# LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

## COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2008

7.30 p.m.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992. See attached note from the Chief Executive.

### 3. MINUTES

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3 - 36

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008.

### 4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### 5. TO RECEIVE ANY DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS

37 - 44

The deputations and petitions that have been received for presentation to the Council Meeting are set out in the attached agenda item 5.

### 6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

45 - 46

**(Maximum of 30 minutes allowed)**

The questions which have been received are set out in agenda item 6.

### 7. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

47 - 54

**(Maximum of 30 minutes allowed)**

The questions which have been received are set out in agenda item 7.

## **8. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**

**8 .1 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2007/08 55 - 76**

**8 .2 Report of the Cabinet Meeting of 7th May 2008 77 - 86**

1. Mail Forwarding Businesses Registration

**8 .3 Report of the Cabinet Meeting of 11th June 2008 87 - 298**

1. Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2020 and Local Area Agreement

2. Strategic Plan, Annual Report and Best Value Performance Plan

## **9. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

### **9 .1 Joint Arrangements**

No business under this heading to be considered.

### **9 .2 External Organisations**

No business under this heading to be considered.

## **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **10 .1 Proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution: Development Procedure Rules/Planning Code of Conduct**

Report to follow, to incorporate the comments of the Standards Committee (17<sup>th</sup> June 2008) on proposed changes to the Planning Code of Conduct

## **11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

### **11 .1 Motion submitted by Councillor Mamun Rashid regarding Community Centre for Tarling Estate**

**Proposed: Councillor Mamun Rashid**

**Seconded: Councillor Harun Miah**

This council believes that all avenues must be explored to meet the funding gap of £400,000 required to allow development of the promised full-scale community centre to meet the urgent local needs.

## 11 .2 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding ID Cards

**Proposed: Councillor Stephanie Eaton**

**Seconded: Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan**

This Council notes:

1. That Parliament has created identity card legislation.
2. This legislation will have an impact on all residents within Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

1. That the proposed scheme will impose substantial and disproportionate costs on the Council.
2. That the cost of ID cards would be better spent on employing crime prevention measures such as more police officers, and target hardening.

3. ID cards have the potential to have a negative impact on social cohesion and notes the concerns of the Metropolitan Police Service to that effect:

*'The scheme could become compulsory prematurely for those disadvantaged members of society, because they would have to have an ID Card in order to access Social Security Benefits, etc. It should also be noted that many of the visible ethnic minorities are over-represented in this socio-economically deprived group. We have severe reservations that the scheme could add to tensions at a time when the police service is investing greatly in gaining confidence across all communities'.*

This Council will:

1. Make it a policy of the Council to ensure that national identity cards would not be required to access council services or benefits unless specifically required to do so by Act of Parliament.
2. Take no part in any pilot scheme or feasibility work in relation to the introduction of the national identity cards.
3. Only co-operate with the national identity card scheme where to do otherwise would be unlawful.
4. Affiliate to the NO2ID campaign whose supporters already include MPs and Peers of all parties, Borough, County and District Councils, and unions (including UNISON, the largest union in the UK with 1.3 million members).

### **11 .3 Motion submitted by Councillor Timothy Archer regarding Leaseholder Services**

**Proposed: Councillor Timothy Archer**  
**Seconded: Councillor Peter Golds**

Council notes the continuing dissatisfaction of leaseholders with the overall service they receive from Tower Hamlets Council, particularly in respect of:

- information and consultation on both major works and annual service charges
- the overall level of both major works and annual charges, particularly the administration and management element.
- the value for money that these charges represent and the quality of the services that leaseholders are asked to pay for

Furthermore this council notes the following recent developments:

- the £50 refund being made to leaseholders by this council in recognition of leaseholder grievances and excessive charges to date
- the recent Lister House Leasehold Valuation Tribunal case that the Council lost.

This council therefore resolves to call on the executive to:

- provide leaseholders with an appropriate level of reassurance on the process and resulting charges levied by the Council, by way of an independent audit of leaseholder services to establish that Leaseholder service charges are fair and appropriately calculated. This review should be carried out by an recognised independent firm of auditors.

### **11 .4 Motion submitted by Councillor Alex Heslop regarding support for the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Sector**

**Proposed: Councillor Alex Heslop**  
**Seconded: Councillor Denise Jones**

This Council recognises that there is a diverse and healthy co-operative sector in Tower Hamlets with a combined turnover of approximately £50 million and also appreciates the important role that co-operatives and other social enterprises can play in community and economic regeneration initiatives. Although there are many successful co-operative enterprises operating in Tower Hamlets such as Tower Hamlets Community Credit Union, Tower Hamlets CDA and Greenwich Leisure (effectively a workers co-op), as well as several food co-ops and housing co-operatives, there is not a single council officer with a specific remit or indeed expertise for working with the co-operative & social enterprise sectors.

This Council resolves to do the following:

- Allocate responsibility for supporting the co-operative & social enterprise sectors to the Lead Member for Regeneration as well as a designated council officer who will promote and support new mutual models for the provision of community services, including housing, pre-school childcare, residential and home care, recycling and leisure. Made possible through service reviews, externalising, or re-contracting services and procurement procedures.
- Organise an annual event to celebrate International Co-operatives Day in partnership with the local Co-operative Movement; this could also involve the Tower Hamlets Partnership and its Creating and Sharing Prosperity Community Plan Action Group.
- Develop procurement strategies that make a direct link between the Community Plan and other strategic objectives and contract specifications ensuring that community benefits can be fully integrated into the procurement process.
- Work with the Co-operative Sector and London Development Agency to improve access to finance and support for socially and mutually owned businesses.
- Work with staff and unions on a partnership basis in the creation of new cooperative services.

#### **11 .5 Motion submitted by Councillor Oliur Rahman regarding security for visitors to Bangladesh**

**Proposed: Councillor Oliur Rahman**

**Secoded: t.b.c.**

The Council notes with concern a number of incidents that have occurred in recent years when visitors to Bangladesh have experienced violence or intimidation. These include Rizwan Hossain, the British Bangladeshi barrister who was mistreated at Zia International airport in April 2008, and a Member of our own Council who experienced a distressing shooting incident at her property in Bangladesh in January 2007.

The Council notes that this issue has been raised with the British High Commission in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh High Commission in the UK, the Bangladesh Home Secretary and Metropolitan Police, Advisor and Foreign advisor in the Bangladesh government and others but so far no reply has been received except from one MP, and no incident investigation has been resolved.

The Council believes that action should be taken to ensure the safety and security of British Bangladeshi and other people when they visit Bangladesh on holiday or for other reasons, whether at the airport, in their home or in a public place.

The Council calls on the British and Bangladeshi governments to act to prevent further incidents of this nature and to compensate victims of such events.

**11 .6 Motion submitted by Councillor Shahed Ali regarding webcasting/pro-active access to Council Committee meetings**

**Proposed: Councillor Shahed Ali**  
**Seconded: Councillor Dulal Uddin**

This Council Believes:

It has a duty to involve all members of the public to access council and the various committee meetings we hold in the Town Hall. The council understands that it is difficult for persons to attend these meetings, particularly to persons with physical disabilities due to the location of the Town Hall. With a growing population of 200,000+, accommodation facilities are restricted to 30 persons in the public gallery. Therefore further accommodation is provided by means of large-screen broadcast in adjoining room.

Every individual has the fundamental right to play an equal role in society, and this council seeks to pro-actively address identified needs to ensure all persons have equal access to engage with the work of the council.

This Council further believes:

Web casting plays a major role in the government's agenda under the e-democracy and e-government banner. Web casting council meetings will provide access to the hard to reach members of our communities and would increase the level of local involvement in the decision making process of the council.

Web casting will further enrich the debate within the council chamber, improve decorum and add value to the council's meetings and other democratic processes. It will enable young people in particular to grow interest in council business, empowering them to get more involved with their community, and more prepared as potential future councillors. Web casting will give further credence to and enhance the council's Beacons status award of 'Getting Closer to Communities'.

This Council resolves to:

Agree to web cast the various council meetings subject to a cost evaluation.

This Council instructs:

- (a) Officers to immediately set up a working group in order to proceed to investigate the mechanics of providing web casts of the various council meetings.



- (b) The working group is to provide a report together with a costing forecast for this provision to be completed and submitted for discussion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 29 May 2008, with a view to submitting recommendations to Cabinet scheduled for 7 May 2008 for possible adoption at full council scheduled for 21 May 2008.
- (c) Democratic Services and Chief Executives Communications budget to determine and to set-aside £20,000 within their budget/s for the Municipal year 2008/9 to realise the above.

## **11 .7 Motion submitted by Councillor Philip Briscoe regarding Special Constables**

**Proposed: Councillor Philip Briscoe**

**Seconded: Councillor Peter Golds**

This Council Notes:

1. That Special Constables provide invaluable support to local Police forces across the country.
2. That Special Constables have the same powers as regular officers when they complete their training, including the power of arrest,
3. That Special Constables have been shown to produce results from local reassurance policing and from schemes such as "Shopwatch".
4. That the recruitment and retention of Special Constables is difficult and results are based on local actions, such as advertising, management and high profile local championing of the role of Specials.
5. That employers can discover significant returns in staff development, training and morale, by providing support for those who wish to serve as Special Constables.

This Council Resolves:

1. To work with the Tower Hamlets Borough Constabulary to prioritise the recruitment and retention of Special Constables.
2. To provide assistance to any recruitment and information campaigns, including the use of East End Life as an advertising channel.
3. To provide information to local businesses and employers, so that they can foster more Special Constable volunteers as a way of Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV).

4. To offer full support, via ESV, to employees of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets who wish to apply to become Special Constables.
5. To apply the full Council Tax discount that is available to Special Constables – that anyone who is a Special Constable and a council tax payer in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets will be able to claim a 50% discount in their annual bills.

#### **11 .8 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding the Arms Trade**

**Proposed: Councillor Harun Miah**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

This Council is committed to promoting peace and cohesion, and maintaining security and safety.

We oppose the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and join with Mayor of London Ken Livingstone and others in opposing the biennial arms fair, Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEi), held in East London.

We believe it is the responsibility of Councils to offer leadership in actively promoting peace and conciliation. On behalf of the people of Tower Hamlets we call on our government to do likewise and we reaffirm our opposition to any moves to draw British troops into US plans for fresh aggressions against Iran.

We will communicate these decisions and encourage debate around them through our website, through East End Life and other appropriate means.

#### **11 .9 Motion submitted by Councillor Ahmed Hussain regarding the future of the GP surgeries in Tower Hamlets**

**Proposed: Councillor Ahmed Hussain**

**Seconded: Councillor Peter Golds**

Last year the Tower Hamlets PCT had honoured the contract of St Pauls Way surgery to a private company called Atos Origin. Despite the fact the company does not have any background experience on health; they were still given the contract. The people of Tower Hamlets specially the 10,000 residents that use the surgery have opposed this. But the residents were not at all heard.

The Council notes:

- That the residents of Tower Hamlets should be heard.
- That all the elected members have the duty to uphold the voice their electorate.
- Those 10,000 residents equate to 5% of the Borough's population which should be heard.

This Council believes:

- That it promotes the vision of the residents of Tower Hamlets
- That it wants its residents to be heard
- That it promotes its residents and would intervene as and when necessary if the people of the borough do not feel the service provided is adequate.

This Council calls on those responsible to ensure:

- That a fair and transparent investigation will be taken place as soon as possible
- Those surgeries that are due to be contracted out should be on hold until a review has taken place.
- That the council and councillors should be involved in the tendering and interview process.
- That the lead member of Health and Wellbeing will take necessary steps to ensure that these surgeries are not given away to private incompetent companies in future.

#### **11 .10 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding PCT and GP practice contracting**

**Proposed: Councillor Abjol Miah**

**Seconded: Councillor Shahed Ali**

Council notes

- Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust has awarded a 10-year contract for providing general practice services to Atos Healthcare
- This company took over running services at the St Paul's Way Medical Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008
- The anger of patients and general practice staff that this contract has been awarded to a private, for-profit organisation
- An 80-strong general practice forum vote (with one against) of no confidence in the PCT following this decision
- Atos Healthcare is part of Atos Origin, the company awarded the IT contract for the Olympics, with company profits of £235 million in 2006.
- Atos Healthcare has no experience of running general practice services in this country.
- The walk-in health centre at Canary Wharf which Atos currently run for the PCT has been the subject of complaints from those working there, and has been operating well under capacity.
- The PCT manages six other GP health practises in Tower Hamlets which also face being tendered and awarded to private companies in the same way

Council resolves

To support local GP-led or not-for profit provision of health care services  
To conduct a full consultation with residents before any future PCT decision on GP health practice contracts are tendered.

## **11 .11 Motion submitted by Councillor Md. Abdul Munim regarding Financial Rescue Schemes**

**Proposed: Councillor Md. Abdul Munim**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

In light of warnings from housing charity Shelter against the dangers of so called 'mortgage rescue schemes', which can lead to financial loss or even homelessness, Council notes

1. That such schemes target homeowners struggling with debt and mortgage arrears, offering 'rescue packages' to buy their homes and rent them back to former owners. In reality people receive a fraction of the market value of their property and are only offered short-term tenancy agreements, which leave them vulnerable to eviction after only a few months.
2. Shelter's call for Government to bring these companies under the regulation of the Financial Services Authority and an urgent investigation into their advertising practices

Council resolves to:

1. Warn residents of the possible dangers involved in such schemes
2. Recommend residents to seek independent financial advice before selling their home through a mortgage rescue scheme
3. Suspend advertising by any such companies through East End Life and any other Council media, pending a review of the service offered.

## **11 .12 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding the East London Line**

**Proposed: Councillor Dulal Uddin**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

Council notes that the London Underground's East London Line (ELL) is due to close in December 2007 and welcomes the extension of the ELL and improved access to and from East London.

We further note that the East London line is currently operated by London Underground and that the Mayor of London has announced plans to transfer the ownership and management of the ELL from London Underground to the private sector in 2010.

The Public Private Partnership on London Underground has already created a fragmented network with frequent service disruptions. Privatisation of the East London Line will exacerbate that fragmentation and could be the thing end of the wedge with other lines and services transferred to other companies in the future.

This Council strongly urges the Mayor of London and Transport for London to retain operation and ownership of the East London Line in the public sector.

This Council strongly urges the Mayor of London and Transport for London's Chief Operating Officer for London Rail, Howard Smith, to carry out full and active consultation prior to any decision being made, in the areas served by the ELL.