

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2011

**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

NB: The order of business was varied during the course of the meeting but for ease of reference, the decision sheet is in the same order as the agenda.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Abdul Asad, Shiria Khatun, Mohammed Abdul Mukit and Zenith Rahman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Please see minutes.

3. MINUTES

DECISION

That the minutes of the ordinary Council meeting held on 8th December 2010 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair of Council be authorised to sign them accordingly.

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Please see minutes.

5. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS

5.1 Petition from Mr. Matthew Smith and others re: touting on Brick Lane

Mr. Matthew Smith and Mr. Philip Vracas addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor, then responded to the issues raised.

DECISION

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

5.2 Petition from Parents, Grandparents, Carers and Children of Olga SureStart Centre opposing the closure of the centre

Mr. Pierre Fabri and Ms. Raquel Aguado addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, then responded to the issues raised.

DECISION

That the petition be referred to the Acting Corporate Director, Children, Schools and Families for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Isobel Cattermole, Acting Corporate Director, Children, Schools and Families)

5.3 Petition from the Save King Edward Park Campaign re: Thames Water's proposed works at the park

Ms. Emma Dunsire addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mayor Lutfur Rahman then responded to the issues raised.

DECISION

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

6.1 Question from Mr. Richard Desmond re: A Pride March for East London in 2011

The above question and an oral supplementary question were put and were responded to by Mayor Lutfur Rahman.

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

6.2 Question from Mr. Ahmed Hussain re: creation of more jobs in the borough

The above question and an oral supplementary question were put and were responded to by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

(Action by: Aman Dalvi, Corporate Director, Development and Renewal)

6.3 Question from Mr. John Wright re: East End Homes

The above question and an oral supplementary question were put and were responded to by Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member, Housing.

(Action by: Aman Dalvi, Corporate Director, Development and Renewal)

6.4 Question from Ms. Anna Begum re: increase in the number of Tesco stores across the borough

The above question and an oral supplementary question were put and were responded to by Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

7. ELECTED MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council meeting. The Leader of the Majority Group, Leaders of the Minority Groups and Councillor Stephanie Eaton each responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

- 8.1 Question from Councillor Joshua Peck to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Oliur Rahman re: the number of Children's Centres for Tower Hamlets
- 8.2 Question from Councillor Peter Golds to the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Alibor Choudhury, re: sharing staff and back office functions with adjoining authorities and public sector bodies
- 8.3 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed re: lack of toilet facilities in the Brick Lane area
- 8.4 Question from Councillor Anna Lynch to the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Alibor Choudhury re: the estimated additional full year cost of setting up and staffing the Mayor's Office
- 8.5 Question from Councillor Tim Archer to the Mayor re: the future of the Isle of Dogs hoppa bus
- 8.6 Question from Councillor Harun Miah to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed re: the Council's contract with Veolia (No supplementary question was asked)
- 8.7 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ohid Ahmed re: increasing recycling rates in the Borough
- 8.8 Question from Councillor David Snowdon to the Mayor re: East End Life
- 8.9 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders to the Mayor re: the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park
- 8.10 Question from Councillor Zara Davis to the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Alibor Choudhury, re: engagement with residents on budget proposals

The above questions and in each case (except where indicated) a supplementary question were put and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Cabinet Member.

Questions 8.11 to 8.24 were not put as the time allowed for this agenda item had expired. Written responses will be provided to each question.

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

There was no business under this heading.

10. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)

There was no business under this heading.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Review of proportionality and allocation of places on committees and panels of the Council

DECISION

1. That the review of proportionality at paragraph 3 to the report of the Service Head, Democratic Services be noted and the allocation of seats on committees and panels established for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2010/11 be agreed as set out in paragraph 4.2 to the report.
2. That Members and deputies be appointed to serve on those committees and panels in accordance with nominations from the political groups to be notified to the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services).

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 Motion proposed by Councillor Fozol Miah regarding the Condem Government cuts

Councillor Fozol Miah moved, and Councillor Harun Miah seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor David Edgar moved, and Councillor Helal Abbas seconded, a tabled amendment to the motion. This amendment was put to the vote and was agreed.

Councillor Peter Golds moved, and Councillor Tim Archer seconded, a further tabled amendment to the motion. This amendment was put to the vote and was defeated.

The substantive motion as amended was put to the vote and was agreed as follows:

DECISION**This Council notes that:**

- 1) The Con Dem Coalition government is imposing very severe cuts on local government, including £70 million cuts on Tower Hamlets
- 2) These cuts are affecting poorer areas like Tower Hamlets much more severely than better off areas represented by the Conservatives and Lib Dems
- 3) These cuts will have a disastrous effect on the essential services provided by this Council
- 4) These cuts will have a disastrous effect on employment in the borough as jobs in the Council disappear
- 5) The effects of these cuts are going to be compounded by rising unemployment particularly but not exclusively amongst our young people
- 6) The cuts in local government spending are also being made worse by other cuts such as the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance and by the massive increase in university tuition fees
- 7) The Government has announced that it will provide a Council Tax Freeze Grant to councils that set a Council Tax increase of 0%. This will be equivalent to the difference between a 0% Council Tax and raising 2011/12 Council Tax by 2.5%.

This Council believes that:

- 1) These cuts are unnecessary and unjustified
- 2) The government deficit which is being used to justify these cuts is the product of the chaos and decline in the real economy brought about by the reckless activity of the financial sector
- 3) The deficit does need to be reduced over time but in the first instance this must be through economic growth which is being jeopardised by the Government's spending cuts
- 4) The deficit can be further reduced by taxing those most able as opposed to least able to pay through exceptional taxes on bank profits and bankers' bonuses.
- 5) The focus in reducing the deficit should be on protecting services that are essential to working people and the less well off.

This Council recognises the difficulties imposed on the Council, given the central Government cuts, by the legal requirement to produce a so-called "balanced budget".

This Council wants

- 1) The budget being prepared for vote on 23rd February to reflect the perspective outlined above

- 2) Every effort to be made both to eliminate waste and drive up efficiency in the delivery of council services
 - 3) Maximum consultation with the trade union representatives of the council staff and with the recipients of the council's services to try to identify efficiency savings and to minimise the adverse effects of the government imposed cuts.
 - 4) A campaign, such as the one being pursued by Lambeth Council, informing Tower Hamlets residents of the unprecedented cuts being imposed by the Con Dem Coalition government and inviting them into a dialogue on the best way forward.
 - 5) A campaign to inform every Tower Hamlets resident of the great march and demonstration against the cuts called by the Trades Union Congress for Saturday 26th March
- (Action by: Chris Naylor, Corporate Director, Resources)

12.2 Motion proposed by Councillor Rabina Khan regarding King Edward VII Memorial Park

With the consent of the meeting under Procedure Rule 15.8.1, Councillor Rabina Khan altered the text of her motion.

Councillor Rabina Khan moved, and Councillor Alibor Choudhury seconded, the revised motion as tabled.

Councillor Dr. Emma Jones moved, and Councillor Zara Davis seconded, a tabled amendment to the motion which was accepted by Councillor Rabina Khan.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was agreed as follows:

DECISION

The Council notes:

1. That Thames Water is planning to deface one of Tower Hamlets key community assets, King Edward VII Memorial Park, a landmark of the East End both for its historical significance and its social value;
2. That at present the park is well used by the community all year round and it provides an oasis in an area where green spaces are scarce;
3. That King Edward VII Memorial Park is vital to the community life of Shadwell, Wapping, Limehouse and Stepney and that damaging it in any way or reducing its accessibility and possibility of enjoyment for any period of time would bear an immediate and irreparable impact on said communities;

4. That Thames Water is planning an upgrade of London's sewer system and has recently consulted on a number of proposed routes for the proposed Thames Tunnel sewer from Tower Hill to the sewage treatment works at Beckton;
5. That King Edward VII Memorial Park was opened in 1922 by King George V and has been one of the green lungs of the borough for nearly 90 years.

The Council recognises:

1. The extensive proposed works will damage the mature vegetation and wildlife habitats beyond repair and will make the park, its amenities and the Thames river path unusable for the duration of the Tunnel build;
2. Once the works are completed, the community will be left with a concrete promontory on the foreshore and huge buildings that will deface the beautiful riverfront, spoil the park view completely and erode the use the community makes of the park and its inherent heritage value;
3. That the proposed Thames Water plans for the park and its foreshore are unacceptable as the impact they will cause far outweighs the benefits it would bring to Tower Hamlets' community;
4. That there are alternative Brownfield sites that Thames Water has failed to examine;
5. That Thames Water's current plans for construction in King Edward VII Memorial Park and on its foreshore appear to be in blatant contravention of the approved Council's strategy for open spaces based on the principles of impact on health, quality of life and preservation of biodiversity;
6. That Thames Water's preferred 'Abbey Mill' route includes overflow points on the foreshore of the King Edward VII Memorial Park in Shadwell, and part of the back of Narrow Street;
7. That Narrow Street is a historical thoroughfare through Shadwell and Limehouse, containing rare examples of Georgian terracing;
8. That the alternative 'River Thames' route includes shaft sites at Sir John McDougal Gardens and Bellgate Place on Westferry Road;
9. That the borough has a shortage of open space and that the area around Sir John McDougal Gardens is one of the most densely populated in the borough;
10. That Thames Water has also shortlisted sites at Shadwell Basin, Limehouse Basin and School House Lane.

The Council resolves:

1. To protect King Edward VII Memorial Park and its foreshore from Thames Water's proposed plans and any future plan that may damage the park and the use the community makes of it;
2. To oppose and challenge to the full extent of its capacity said plans at every level of consultation and to obtain independent technical advice to support the continuing scrutiny of emerging proposals;
3. To continue to oppose and challenge Thames Water to use Brownfield sites where sustainable and technically feasible;
4. To object to the River Thames route which would involve shaft sites at Sir John McDougal Gardens and Bellgate Place on Westferry Road;
5. To object to the shortlisting of the Shadwell Basin, Limehouse Basin and School House Lane sites;
6. To call upon Thames Water to give consideration to the many public objections to the proposed route via Shadwell and Limehouse, and the alternative River Thames route via Millwall;
7. To ensure that the Executive Mayor meets with Thames Water to discuss the route of the Thames Tunnel and to urge them to rule out the proposed route and the River Thames route in favour of the alternative via Rotherhithe.

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

12.3 Motion proposed by Councillor Tim Archer regarding recording Council meetings**DECISION****This Council notes that:**

- It is able to audibly and visually record council meetings using current technical equipment available in the council chamber.
- It is able to record business conducted at Full Council with little or no cost to the taxpayer.

This council believes that:

- democracy and accountability are important concepts in order to gain public trust in the decision making in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

- residents should be able to refer to and view council meetings through the use of audio visual equipment.
- conduct of Members of the Council will be positively affected by the knowledge that footage is in the public domain.

This Council resolves: -

- To audio and video record each meeting of the Full Council to enable reference for members of the public, Council Members and officers and to increase transparency and accountability.
- To amend the Tower Hamlets Council Constitution, Part 4, Rule 27.1 to read 'No photography or video or audio recording of any kind by guests and members of the public may take place at any Council Meeting without the express permission of the Chair.'
- To introduce to the Tower Hamlets Council Constitution, Part 4, Rule 27.2 to read 'The Council Chamber, whilst the public gallery is open and the Council is conducting its business at the Meeting of the Tower Hamlets Council, will be video and audio recorded by the Council and made available online within 48 hours.'

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

12.4 Motion proposed by Councillor Harun Miah regarding "Bin Veolia"

Councillor Harun Miah moved, and Councillor Fozol Miah seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Stephanie Eaton moved, and Councillor Ohid Ahmed seconded, an amendment which was accepted by Councillor Harun Miah.

The motion as amended was put to the vote and was agreed as follows:-

DECISION

This Council notes that:

- 1) This Council has long-term contracts with the multinational company Veolia
- 2) Veolia is deeply involved in contract work for the Israeli government which assist their continued oppression of the Palestinian people
- 3) In particular Veolia is directly implicated in maintaining illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory
- 4) Under the Public Contract Regulations (2006) a contracting local authority may exclude an economic contractor from bidding for a contract if the contractor has "committed an act of grave misconduct in the course of its business"

This Council believes that:

- 1) Veolia has clearly committed acts of grave misconduct in relation to the Palestinian people and the maintenance of illegal settlements and in other respects as well
- 2) There should be an urgent investigation by Council officers to confirm the charges of grave misconduct that have been levelled in the international campaign to "Bin Veolia"
- 3) This Council should do everything in its power to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against the pariah state of Israel.
- 4) Urgent steps should be taken to review all contracts with Veolia and not to place any further contracts with this company
- 5) The Mayor should write to Veolia as soon as possible to communicate to them the contents of this motion and the council's determination to terminate any relationship to Veolia.

(Action by: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

Motion 12.5 was not put, and motion 12.6 was not considered, due to the time limit for the meeting being reached.

The meeting ended at 10.30 p.m.