

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 13 JULY 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 Lutfu Begum, Carli Harper-Penman and Shelina Aktar (for lateness).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Please see minutes.

3. MINUTES

DECISION

That the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 18th May 2011 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair of the 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

4.1 Mr Barry Blandford

The Chair of Council made an announcement regarding the death on 2nd July 2011 of Mr Barry Blandford, a former Councillor for Lansbury Ward and Mayor of Tower Hamlets in 1991/92. He outlined Mr Blandford's work and achievements for the Borough.

Tributes to Mr Barry Blandford were also paid by Councillors Stephanie Eaton, Joshua Peck and Peter Golds.

The Council then rose for a minute's silence in Mr Blandford's memory.

5. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS**5.1 Petition from Mr A. Bentham and Mr Terry McGrenara regarding Budget Savings**

Mr Terry McGrenara addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources, then responded to the issues raised.

DECISION

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

(Action by: Chris Naylor, Corporate Director, Resources)

5.2 Petition from East London Teachers' Association regarding Academy Status

Mr Paul McGarr 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 & Families, for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

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

5.3 Petition from Mr Ernest Dawe and others regarding Council properties in Bruce Road, E3

Mr Ernest Dawe addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Rabina Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing, then responded to the issues raised.

DECISION

That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Development & Renewal, for a written response on any outstanding matters within 28 days.

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

Additional Petition

The Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 19.2 to enable the following additional petition to be heard:-

5.4 Petition from Mr Glyn Robbins and others regarding the English Defence League (EDL)

Mr Glyn Robbins addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members.

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

6.1 Question from Mr Sheikh Raquib to Mayor Lutfur Rahman regarding Major Works charges made by housing associations in the borough.

6.2 Question from Ms Myra Garrett to Mayor Lutfur Rahman regarding housing benefit payments.

6.3 Question from Mr Saif Uddin to Mayor Lutfur Rahman regarding housing benefit payments.

6.4 Question from Ms Sultana Ali to Mayor Lutfur Rahman regarding King Edward Memorial Park.

6.5 Question from Ms Kerstyn Comley of The Wapping and Shadwell Secondary Education Trust to Mayor Lutfur Rahman on the matter of an application submitted by the Trust to provide a comprehensive, inclusive free school.

NB: The above questions were not put due to the time limit of the meeting being reached. Written responses will be provided to each question.

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

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

No report was made due to the time limit for the meeting being reached.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**8.1 Question from Councillor Judith Gardiner to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:**

“Can the Mayor tell me why the Council is selling large, family sized homes at auction to the highest bidder when there is a desperate shortage of this type of social housing across the Borough?”

8.2 Question from Councillor David Snowdon to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“In the course of his duties on behalf of Tower Hamlets Council has the Mayor ever consulted the Islamic Forum for Europe on Council policy? Does he believe they are an appropriate organisation to consult on Council matters?”

8.3 Question from Councillor Kosru Uddin to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Does the Mayor share my concerns over potential police counter closures and changes to Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Tower Hamlets?”

8.4 Question from Councillor Harun Miah to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Councillor Oliur Rahman:

“Whilst acknowledging that it is ignorance rather than knowledge which leads young people into unfortunate, inappropriate and abusive sexual relationships, is the Cabinet Member for Education aware of the widespread concern amongst many parents about the current practices in teaching Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in the borough, particularly in relation to some aspects of SRE being taught to those under the age of 11 and being taught with a particular DVD which has provoked concern, and could he outline what measures the Council is taking to reassure parents that Sex and Relationship Education in this borough is taught appropriately, using the appropriate materials and at the appropriate ages?”

8.5 Question from Councillor David Edgar to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Can the Mayor tell me how many jobs so far have been taken up by Tower Hamlets residents as a result of the deal made between him and LOCOG?”

8.6 Question from Councillor Zara Davis to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“In 2010 how many GCSE students in LBTH schools achieved 5 A* grades including English and Maths, and how many A2 students at LBTH colleges and sixth forms achieved at least 1 A* and 2 A grades? What is being done to ensure that the brightest students in our borough are being stretched?”

8.7 Question from Councillor Denise Jones to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Can the Mayor tell me what negotiations the Council has had with LOCOG over the Olympic Route Network?”

8.8 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Rabina Khan:

“Is the Cabinet Member for Housing aware that many homes, including large family homes, built in recent years have been built in “car free zones”, that large and poorer families in particular need large family cars

for cheap and secure transport and to transport foodstuffs in bulk and that “car free” homes therefore discriminate against larger and poorer families and will she therefore agree to lobby central government to repeal legislation and to seek changes to strategic planning which has imposed these “car free” homes on Tower Hamlets residents, to seek any loopholes that may exist to reduce the number of “car free” homes that currently exist or will be built in the future and to seek to enable residents in “car free” homes access to at least one resident’s parking permit if needed?”

8.9 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Can the Mayor tell me what the composition of the new Health and Wellbeing board will be?”

8.10 Question from Councillor Craig Aston to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“What progress has been made in implementing the Motion in the names of Councillors Snowden and Davis agreed at the Full Council meeting on October 27th which called for the full details of all premises, regulated entertainment and late night refreshment licenses to be published on the Tower Hamlets Website?”

8.11 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Can the Mayor update me on the Council’s bid for city status and tell me what Council resources are being used to support the bid?”

8.12 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Rabina Khan:

“Could I be advised how much the Borough pays to send waste to landfill, and how much of this cost could be saved by the use of the waste to energy facility proposed for Fish Island South? How can existing local residents and the residents of the forecast 2000 new homes at Fish Island be informed about the safety and environmental impact of the facility, especially in relation to emissions and the siting of such a plant in a flood risk area?”

8.13 Question from Councillor Mohammed Abdul Mukit to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Councillor Oliur Rahman:

“Can the Lead Member tell me what discussions the Council has had with Bethnal Green Technology College about its bid for Academy Status?”

8.14 Question from Councillor Peter Golds to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Having used £120,000 of public money on a new office suite, which will enable the Mayor to, according to East End Life, “host foreign dignitaries”;

sending council officers to purchase two iPhone 4 handsets at £600 each and;

leasing a silver Mercedes car from ING car leasing at £72 per day, plus chauffeur.

Will the Mayor inform the Council which are the next personal aspects of his office to be enhanced from public money and whether he will be visiting the Government Art Collection to secure suitably impressive art works for the Mayor of a London Borough to be made available when he is receiving “foreign dignitaries” in his one way mirrored office?”

8.15 Question from Councillor Joshua Peck to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Will the Mayor commit to working with all political groups, the Police, Interfaith Forum and community organisations to respond to any planned action by the EDL this summer in Tower Hamlets and ensure the safety and security of residents?”

8.16 Question from Councillor Emma Jones to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“When will work commence to repair Wapping Wall, as agreed in this years' budget?”

8.17 Question from Councillor Anna Lynch to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Can the Mayor confirm that residential care we may provide for our Learning Disabled residents has been recently inspected and that we have addressed any concerns; and whether the difficulties being experienced by provider Southern Cross will have an impact on any of our homes?”

8.18 Question from Councillor Tim Archer to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Does the Mayor believe we are an energy efficient council?”

8.19 Question from Councillor Anwar Khan to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Can the Mayor give me an update on the progress made by the Council to promote Fairtrade products amongst Council catering services, residents and community groups and on asking Council contractors to provide Fairtrade goods?”

8.20 Question from Councillor Maium Miah to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“Will the Mayor inform Members how he will be allocating the 1000 jobs that Lord Coe has provided to Tower Hamlets? What provision has he in

place that these will be spread across the borough and will include Millwall and the Isle of Dogs.?”

8.21 Question from Councillor Gloria Thienel to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

“What steps has the Mayor taken to make sure we receive good value for money from our role in hosting a large section of the London Marathon?”

8.22 Question from Councillor Shafiqul Haque to Mayor Lutfur Rahman:

Question withdrawn.

NB: The above questions were not put as the time limit for the meeting had been reached. 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

9.1 Tower Hamlets Community Plan Refresh 2011

DECISION

1. That the Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2011 be approved as attached at Appendix 1 to the report (CAB 005/112) (Attached at Appendix A to the Council report).
2. That the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Mayor, be authorised to make appropriate and necessary amendments to the Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2011 prior to publication.

(Action by: Isabella Freeman, Assistant Chief Executive [Legal Services])

9.2 Responsible Drinking Borough

DECISION

That the London Borough of Tower Hamlets be designated by means of a Designated Public Place Order under Section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, to be known as a Responsible Drinking Borough, as set out in the circulated Cabinet report (CAB 014/112).

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

9.3 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

DECISION

That the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2010/11 be noted.

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

There was no business under this agenda item.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2010-11, Update to 31 May 2011

DECISION

That the report be noted.

(Action by: Chris Naylor, Corporate Director, Resources)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 Motion proposed by Councillor Bill Turner regarding Academy Schools – Bethnal Green Technology College

Councillor Bill Turner moved, and Councillor Amy Whitelock seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda and as amended by their own tabled amendment.

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

Councillor Fozol Miah moved, and Councillor Harun Miah seconded, a further tabled amendment to the motion. This amendment was put to the vote and defeated.

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

This Council notes:

1. That education results in Tower Hamlets have improved at a faster rate than in any other area of the country over the last 10 years.

2. This significant improvement in attainment has been achieved through collective working between schools and the Local Authority, under previous Labour administrations.
3. That the previous Labour Government initiated the academy programme as a way of leveraging funding for improvements in failing schools.
4. That the Tory-led coalition Government's policy to allow outstanding schools to automatically become academies and others to apply for academy status is an extension of their policy of opt-outs in the 1990s and will allow thousands of privately owned and managed schools to operate, fully funded by the taxpayer.
5. That Tower Hamlets Council has consistently maintained its support for non-selective comprehensive education and has previously declined the prospect of an academy in the borough, believing our schools are stronger together than apart.

This Council further notes:

1. The Governors of Bethnal Green Technology College (BGTC) voted apply to become an academy with the intended conversion date of 1st January 2012.
2. BGTC has moved rapidly from special measures and made significant progress in the last three years with exam results rising from 27% 5+ A* to C including English and Maths in 2007 to 59% in 2010.
3. This improvement has been achieved with support from the Local Authority, including £17 million of funding from Building Schools for the Future (BSF).
4. Officers at Tower Hamlets Council are committed to working closely with the leadership and governors of BGTC to achieve the highest aspirations of the school, and the Lead Member for Children's Services has stated his own commitment in this regard.
5. That the leadership of the school however has identified a problem with high levels of midterm admissions, that they believe the Council has failed to resolve.
6. Sir William Burrough and Ian Mikardo schools have also registered interest in academy status.
7. Many local groups and individuals are opposed to BGTC's and other schools' applications for academy status, including the National Union of Teachers, East London Teachers' Association

and local headteachers, several of whom have publicly made a convincing case for the damage academy status would do to the community of schools in our borough, with few tangible benefits for the schools in question.

This Council further notes:

1. That academies are removed from local accountability structures, meaning parents and pupils have no recourse to assistance from local authorities.
2. That academies are not subject to the admissions procedures of the local authority.
3. That there is no conclusive evidence that academy schools are more effective at raising educational standards than other types of maintained school.
4. That academies have a destabilising effect on the ability of neighbouring schools to achieve a balance of abilities amongst their pupil intakes.
5. That exclusions of pupils in academies have been significantly higher than the national average.
6. That parental representation on governing bodies is minimal.
7. That unlike maintained schools, academies are not required to automatically recognise trade unions and many choose not to and that academies are not required to adhere to the national terms of pay and conditions for teachers, meaning that many teachers are subject to inferior arrangements for pay, conditions of service or working time.

This Council believes:

1. That the long-standing principle of the non-selective comprehensive system must be defended, to ensure all our children in Tower Hamlets have free and equal access to a high quality education, regardless of background or income.
2. That the Tory-led Government's academy programme is intended to break up Local Authority involvement in education and extend privatisation in education, removing schools from local, democratic control.
3. That if one school converts to an academy, this will undermine the collective agreement to date between schools that remaining with the Local Authority is in the best interests of local children and there is too much to lose by opting out.

4. That this could lead to more schools becoming academies and result in a two-tier system of state education in Tower Hamlets, with the Local Authority powerless to drive up standards or ensure consistent admission standards or curriculums.
5. That BGTC has significantly benefitted from the strong collective approach to education in Tower Hamlets, not least agreement among local schools that BGTC should be prioritised for BSF funding.
6. That the principle aims of BGTC's academy bid – to become an outstanding school and to become popular and fully subscribed – can be achieved under the current system with support from the Local Authority, as with Stepney Green school before.

This Council resolves:

1. To oppose any future proposal to establish an academy school in Tower Hamlets.
2. To urge the Headteachers and Governors of BGTC to continue to work with the Local Authority family of schools, whatever the outcome of their application for academy status.
3. To work with other schools to maintain support for the collective system of state education provision in Tower Hamlets.
4. To work with BGTC to effectively address its concerns with high levels of midterm admissions.
5. Where schools do convert to academies, to work with parents, teachers and the unions to encourage cooperation with the Local Authority and other schools, to ensure local children's access high quality education is not undermined.

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

12.5 Motion proposed by Councillor Judith Gardiner regarding Housing Sales Phases 2 and 3

Councillor Judith Gardiner moved, and Councillor Helal Uddin seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Timothy Archer proposed, and Councillor Peter Golds seconded, a procedural motion under Rule 14.1.4 as follows:- : "That the matters detailed in this motion be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration." This procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

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

DECISION

This Council notes that:

1. Tower Hamlets has amongst the highest levels of housing need in London with the waiting list standing at about 23,000 households. Of these, over 1,677 households need a home with four bedrooms or more.
2. Despite this, in December 2010, the newly elected Mayor and his Cabinet agreed to dispose of 5 properties in Swaton Road and two other properties – 19 Parfett St (a 6 bed house) 102 Tredegar Road. In April 2011 the Cabinet also agreed to dispose of 63A Sewardstone Road - on the open market by auction.
3. A further 12 properties in Bruce Road, Old Ford Road and Mount Terrace have also been identified for sale.
4. The sales of Swaton Road properties have now taken place and have achieved some £1.6m, the sale of 19 Parfett St, 102 Tredegar Road and 63A Sewardstone Road have already been advertised.

This Council believes

1. That given the desperate need for family size and street level properties in this Borough, disposal of such properties should be halted.
2. That it was wrong for the Mayor to reverse the Labour cabinet's decision to seek to maintain family sized homes as social housing and instead sell them to the highest bidder.

This Council therefore calls upon the Mayor to ensure

1. That receipts from any such sales are ring-fenced for the provision of new family size homes, preferably in the areas where these homes are being lost, rather than for other housing purposes.

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

That the matters detailed in the motion above be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

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

12.12 Motion proposed by Councillor Shiria Khatun regarding the English Defence League

Councillor Shiria Khatun moved, and Councillor Kosru Uddin seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda.

The motion was put to the vote, declared carried unanimously by the Council and was agreed as follows:-

This Council notes:

- That the English Defence League (EDL) has signalled its intention to hold a march in Tower Hamlets this August.
- That the EDL had planned to march through Tower Hamlets in June 2010, but after discussion with the Council, local police and community Groups, their plans were cancelled.
- That previous EDL marches around the UK have been marred by violence, racism and tension within communities.

This Council believes

- That Tower Hamlets is a community which is at its best when it is united.
- That any group or organisation that encourages division and tension in our communities is not welcome in the Borough.

This Council Resolves:

- To call on the Home Secretary to ban the proposed EDL march in Tower Hamlets.
- To work with the Mayor, political groups, the Police, Interfaith Forum and community organisations to respond to any planned action by the EDL and ensure the safety and security of residents.

(Action by: Isabella Freeman, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services); and Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture)

Motions 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.9, 12.10, 12.11, 12.13 and 12.14 were not considered due to the time limit for the meeting being reached.

The meeting ended at 10.30 p.m.