

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 10.00 P.M.* ON WEDNESDAY, 11 JULY 2012

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

[*Note: The meeting was scheduled to commence at 7.30 p.m. or at the rise of the Extraordinary Council Meeting which started at 7.00 p.m., if later.]

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Lesley Pavitt.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Please see the minutes.

3. MINUTES

Councillor Stephanie Eaton referred to the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 18th June 2012. Councillor Eaton stated that she had submitted her apologies for absence prior to the meeting and the draft minutes should be amended to record this.

DECISION

That, subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the following meetings of the Council be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly:

- Ordinary Meeting, 25th January 2012
- Budget Meeting, 22nd February 2012
- Annual Meeting, 16th May 2012
- Ordinary Meeting, 16th May 2012
- Extraordinary Meeting, 18th June 2012

[Note: The Council also at this point agreed the Part 2 minutes of the 16th May Ordinary Meeting and the 18th June Extraordinary Meeting. Item 14 below refers].

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

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

No announcements were made at the meeting.

5. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS

5.1 Petition from Nahida Rashid, Mrs H Ali, Tajul Islam and Shamsul Hoque and signed by 89 persons regarding 'Attack on Bengali as a mother tongue teaching-learning at Langdon Park Secondary School':

This petition was not heard as the petitioners were not present owing to the late start of the meeting.

The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that officers would contact the petitioners and offer them the opportunity to present the petition at the next meeting if they wished.

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

5.2 Petition from Emily Sawyer and signed by 47 persons plus others online regarding the 'Residents Solidarity Campaign':

Petition withdrawn.

5.3 Petition from Mr A S Alom and signed by 39 persons regarding 'Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)':

This petition was not heard as the petitioners were not present owing to the late start of the meeting.

The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that officers would contact the petitioners and offer them the opportunity to present the petition at the next meeting if they wished.

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

5.4 Petition Debate: Youth Service Changes

Mr Helal Ahmed addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and the Council then debated the matters raised by the petition.

Procedural Motion

Councillor Rachael Saunders moved, and Councillor Helal Uddin seconded, a procedural motion – "That under Procedure Rule 14.1.14, Rule 13.1 be

suspended to allow an urgent motion regarding the youth service to be debated.”

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

Councillor Rachael Saunders the moved, and Councillor Helal Uddin seconded, the urgent motion [text of motion as set out in the resolution below].

Following debate, the urgent motion as tabled was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

This Council notes:

That the executive Mayor has decided to bring youth services in house.

That the reasons given for this decision included assertions that money would be saved if the council staff rather than the third sector organisations and schools managed the provider contracts.

That no evidence has been given for this, and no numbers given.

That the decision is not in line with the principles set out in the current Tower Hamlets Children and Young People’s Plan.

That the current providers add significant value to the contracts they hold through supporting services within their own HR and IT and through running additional youth services with their own resources.

That youth services across Tower Hamlets have improved significantly since they were first contracted out, through effective partnership working.

That a significant number of local people have signed a petition to oppose bringing the youth service in house.

This Council believes:

That in tough times it is right to work with partners to seek savings and efficiencies, and wrong to undermine relationships and act unilaterally.

That localism means local power to make decisions, not local talking shops.

That the best youth services support educational attainment and equip our young people to lead their communities. Youth services are there to support excellence not just tackle ASB.

That resources should reflect need, with the greatest resources for areas with the greatest youth population.

That effective hyper local partnerships have been developed between youth services, schools, health services, employers and others through locally based management of services.

That currently our young people are able to shape and lead their own services. This must be strengthened, not weakened, in any future model.

That the targets that the contractors currently report against should continue to be publicly reported against if the service is taken in house.

That the youth service should continue to run at least as great a range of services as it does now.

That it is vital that our youth service includes people from across the whole of Tower Hamlets, young women and men, from all ethnic backgrounds.

This Council resolves:

To oppose bringing the youth service in house.

To call on the Mayor to seek efficiencies working with local community organisations, in a transparent way, not behind closed doors in Mulberry Place.

To call on the Mayor to listen to local people, young people and their families and communities, before making any changes to their youth services.

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

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 6.1 Question from Mr Steve Walker regarding the incidence of tuberculosis in the Borough and the introduction of a by-law to ban spitting in public.

The questioner was not in attendance. The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that a written response would be provided to the questioner.

- 6.2 Question from Mr Stuart Madewell regarding the representation of residents and councillors on Housing Association Boards.

The questioner was not in attendance owing to the late start of the meeting. The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that a written response would be provided to the questioner.

- 6.3 Question from Ms Christine Whaite, Spitalfields Open Space; Chair, The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields regarding lack of open space in the Borough and the potential loss of open space at Christ Church.

Ms Whaite put her question, which was answered by Councillor Shahed Ali, Cabinet Member for Environment. Ms Whaite then put a supplementary question which Councillor Ali answered.

- 6.4 Question from Mr S Mohammed regarding allegations of threats against a female councillor.

The questioner was not in attendance owing to the late start of the meeting. The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that a written response would be provided to the questioner.

- 6.5 Question from Mr Amirul Islam regarding steps to be taken to tackle fuel poverty.

The questioner was not in attendance owing to the late start of the meeting. The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that a written response would be provided to the questioner.

- 6.6 Question from Mr Iqbal Hussain regarding the coalition's moves to reform the welfare state.

The questioner was not in attendance owing to the late start of the meeting. The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that a written response would be provided to the questioner.

- 6.7 Question from Ms Kathy McTasney regarding the promotion of "a workforce to reflect the community".

The questioner was not in attendance owing to the late start of the meeting. The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that a written response would be provided to the questioner.

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

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor made his report to the Council meeting. The Leader of the Majority group and Leaders of the Minority Groups each responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**Procedural Motion**

Councillor Joshua Peck moved, and Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman seconded a procedural motion – “That under Procedural Rule 14.1.9 the Council proceed to next business. The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

The questions (8.1 – 8.27) that had been submitted by Members were therefore not put at the meeting. The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that written responses would be provided to the questioners and published as an appendix to the minutes.

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

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**9.1 Community Safety Plan 2012/13**

The Council considered the report of the Mayor in Cabinet dated 4th July 2012, setting out the Executive’s proposals for the Council’s Community Safety Plan 2012/13.

The Service Head, Democratic Services advised the meeting that the Council on 18th June 2012 had agreed a number of amendments that it wished to make to the Mayor’s draft plan and in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules had referred these back to the Mayor and Executive for consideration. At the Cabinet meeting on 4th July 2012 the Mayor and Executive decided to resubmit the draft plan to the Council unamended for the reasons set out in the circulated report.

Following debate, Councillor Joshua Peck moved and Councillor Uz-Zaman seconded – “That the Community Safety Plan 2012/13 be amended in line with the amendments previously agreed by the Council.”

On being put to the vote there were declared 33 votes for and 17 votes against. The amendment therefore did not achieve the support of two-thirds of the Members present and voting and in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules was defeated, and the draft Community Safety Plan adopted as set out in the Mayor’s proposals.

DECISION

That the Community Safety Plan 2012/13 be adopted as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Cabinet meeting on 4th July 2012 (CAB 015/123).

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

9.2 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council considered the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2011/12.

DECISION

That the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2011/12 be noted.

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

The Council considered the report of the Service Head, Democratic Services, proposing a review of the allocation of members' places on Committees and other bodies governed by the proportionality requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989. The review was required owing to changes in the political composition of the Council that occurred on 25th June 2012.

DECISION

- (1) That the review of proportionality at paragraph 3 in the circulated report be noted and the allocation of seats on committees and panels established for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2012/13 be agreed as set out at paragraph 4.2.
- (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).
- (3) That the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) be authorised to approve the appointment of ungrouped Councillors to any committee places not allocated by the Council to a political group, after consultation with those Councillors and the Speaker of the Council.

(Action by: Isabella Freeman, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services); and John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**12.1 Electoral concerns in Tower Hamlets**

Councillor Peter Golds moved, and Councillor Timothy Archer seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda.

The motion as printed in the agenda was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

This Council notes that:

Following concerns raised by residents, the media, local Members of Parliament and the political parties, the police announced that they would be investigating voting concerns in the borough following the Spitalfields and Banglatown by election on April 19th.

That the election in Spitalfields and Banglatown was decided by 43 votes and that local residents complained of postal votes being collected from their homes by supporters of a particular candidate.

That in one case a householder repeatedly stated that there were just three residents in their property, whilst eight names were registered and all had postal votes.

That in the by election some 14% of postal votes returned to the town hall were rejected because of issues relating to dates of birth and signatures, yet in the May GLA election this figure of rejections fell to 7.66% of postal votes rejected on return.

That the following data concerning the April by election and the May GLA elections from five small areas gives rise to concern:

Brune House, E1

Flats: **92**

Electors: **231**

Registered postal voters: **69**

Postal votes cast April 19th 2012: **55**

Postal Votes Cast May 3rd 2012: **25**

Votes cast in person at polling station on April 19th: **60**

Votes cast in person at polling station on May 3rd 2012: **54**

Herbert House House, E1

Flats: **43**

Electors: **108**

Registered postal voters: **38**

Postal votes cast April 19th 2012: **29**
Postal Votes Cast May 3rd 2012: **19**

Votes cast in person at polling station on April 19th: **27**
Votes cast in person at polling station on May 3rd 2012: **21**

Chicksand House, E1

Flats: **70**
Electors: **194**
Registered postal voters: **46**

Postal votes cast April 19th 2012: **39**
Postal Votes Cast May 3rd 2012: **24**

Votes cast in person at polling station on April 19th: **31**
Votes cast in person at polling station on May 3rd 2012: **32**

8-24 Chicksand Street, E1

Residential properties: **25**
Electors: **67**
Registered postal voters: **38**

Postal votes cast April 19th 2012: **16**
Postal Votes Cast May 3rd 2012: **7**

Votes cast in person at polling station on April 19th: **16**
Votes cast in person at polling station on May 3rd 2012: **11**

14 Brick Lane, E1

Flats: **18**
Electors: **44**
Registered postal voters: **16**

Postal votes cast April 19th 2012: **12**
Postal Votes Cast May 3rd 2012: **4**

Votes cast in person at polling station on April 19th: **0**
Votes cast in person at polling station on May 3rd 2012: **4**

Total votes cast by post from these addresses on April 19th : 151
Total votes cast by post from these addresses on May 3rd: 79

That overall the turnout in Spitalfields and Banglatown in the May 3rd GLA elections increased from that two weeks earlier, yet there is this wide discrepancy in voting as exemplified above and in other areas of the ward.

This Council believes:

That this research coupled with other information, indicates the need for a thorough investigation by the police.

This Council resolves:

To call upon the police to investigate all evidence regarding electoral malpractice in the borough and interview residents, councillors, political activists and journalists to ascertain evidence.

To call upon the Police and the CPS to pursue malpractice through the courts to ensure that everybody has confidence in the electoral process in Tower Hamlets and that it is not bought into further disrepute in this borough.

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

12.2 New Family Migration Rules

Motion withdrawn.

12.3 Increases in serious violent and acquisitive crime

Councillor Abdal Ullah moved, and Councillor Joshua Peck seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda.

The motion as printed in the agenda was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

This Council notes:

- The increase in incidents of serious violent crime and serious acquisitive crime over the past year.
- That there were 19 more incidents of serious violent crimes this year than there were last year; that this is 47 more than the Mayor's target; and that this is a 4.4% increase year on year.
- That there were 353 more incidents of serious acquisitive crime this year than there were last year; that this is 423 more incidents than the Mayor's target; and that this is a 6.6% increase year on year.
- There has been a 4% increase in public concern over vandalism, graffiti and criminal damage in the past year.
- There continues to be serious public concern about the rising levels of crime in Tower Hamlets.

This Council Further Notes:

- Labour's decision to introduce Safer Neighbourhood Teams in every ward led to year on year falls which followed this initiative.

- Labour's introduction of Safer Neighbourhood Teams not only reduced crime in Tower Hamlets but also increased public confidence in the police.
- The decrease in the levels of police community engagement and the loss of many local ward panels.
- The lack of a designated member with responsibility for crime and community safety.

This Council believes:

- The rise in serious violent and serious acquisitive crime over the last year is of significant public importance and should be regarded a priority issue by the executive.
- With serious acquisitive and violent crime increasing the Mayor must do everything he can to protect local communities and reduce rates of criminality.
- That the Conservative-led Government's 20% cuts to policing budgets nationally are putting local communities at risk by cutting the numbers of front line police officers.
- That the Conservative Mayor of London has failed to protect London from these destabilising cuts to the police even in the face of last year's riots and the upcoming Olympic Games.
- The Mayor's administration has been ineffective at protecting community policing from government and GLA police cuts
- The plans for police counter closures and sharing of Safer Neighbourhood Team sergeants should be reversed to ensure a reassuring police presence in our communities.
- There is a clear need for better community based policing including local engagement through ward panels.
- That not having an executive member dedicated solely to crime and community safety sends the wrong message.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Call on the Mayor to adopt a strong policy of community based policing; advocating the retention of local ward panels.
- Request the Council produce an assessment of the impact of sharing SNT sergeants between wards.

- To request the Mayor makes a biannual statement to Council on steps taken to combat crime and reduce anti-social behaviour.

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

12.4 History Teaching And The English Baccalaureate

Councillor Joshua Peck moved and Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman seconded a procedural motion that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

That consideration of the motion as printed in the agenda be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

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

12.5 Defending the Welfare State

Councillor Joshua Peck moved and Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman seconded a procedural motion that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

That consideration of the motion as printed in the agenda be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

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

12.6 Urgent summit to avert a severe housing crisis

Councillor Ohid Ahmed moved and Councillor Alibor Choudhury seconded a procedural motion that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was defeated.

Councillor John Pierce moved and Councillor Sirajul Islam seconded the motion as printed in the agenda.

The motion as printed in the agenda was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

This Council notes:

- London is suffering from a housing crisis. High housing costs are blighting lives in London.
- Social housing is under attack from David Cameron, Nick Clegg and the Tory-led Coalition government.
- The average house price in London is now double that for the country as a whole and prices in London continue to rise, despite falls elsewhere. Moreover, since 2008 private sector rents have risen 30%.
- Far too many workers cannot afford to buy or rent a decent home on the open market, and the social rented sector is struggling to cope with the severe demands placed on it.
- Overcrowding, homelessness and social housing waiting lists are all increasing – sure signs of the strain on people's finances and lives.
- The average house price in London in 2010 was £408,384, 15.1 times the median London income of £27,128, and easily the highest ratio of prices to incomes in the country.
- In 2010, there were 22,707 households on the council's housing waiting list.
- The gross income needed for a mortgage, based on 75% at 3.5 times, was £74,111.

This Council further notes:

- The Mayor of Tower Hamlets recently blogged that "We are committed to building over a thousand new homes each year – which is far more than any other local authority".
- Based on HCA figures, from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, a derisory 200 affordable homes were started, with only 31 social rented, 124 affordable rent, 14 intermediate and 31 affordable home ownership.

This Council resolves:

- The Mayor has broken his pledge to build 1,000 homes a year. In the first full year of the mayoralty, he has only achieved 1/5 of what he had promised during April 2011 to March 2012.
- This failure to build affordable housing will exacerbate the severe housing crisis in the borough.
- That the Mayor should urgently call a summit of social landlords and housing developers working in our borough to devise a strategy to avert this severe housing crisis caused by his administration's lack of leadership on house building.
- To call upon the Mayor to be honest with the electorate about house building and his ability to deliver new homes for the borough.

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

12.7 Social Landlords

Councillor Joshua Peck moved and Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman seconded a procedural motion that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

That consideration of the motion as printed in the agenda be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

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

12.8 Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

Councillor Alibor Choudhury moved, and Councillor Rabina Khan seconded, the motion as printed in the agenda.

The motion as printed in the agenda was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

This Council notes:

- That Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) has produced a Residents Charter
- That the Residents Charter sets out some basic standards which residents believe that social landlords in the borough should adopt

This Council welcomes:

- The fact that TRAs are working together to give residents a voice in the important task of securing improvements in service standards of social landlords.

This Council believes:

- That all social landlords should sign up to the Residents Charter

This Council resolves:

- To endorse the Residents Charter which the Federation has produced
- To request the Mayor to ask social landlords in the borough to commit to meeting the standards set out in the Charter.

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

12.9 High Earners and Council Housing

Councillor Joshua Peck moved and Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman seconded a procedural motion that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

That consideration of the motion as printed in the agenda be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

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

12.10 Threats of violence

Motion withdrawn.

12.11 Housing Benefit Reform

Councillor Joshua Peck moved and Councillor Oliur Rahman seconded a procedural motion that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

That consideration of the motion as printed in the agenda be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

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

Procedural Motion

At this point, Councillor Joshua Peck moved, and Councillor Alibor Choudhury seconded, a procedural motion that consideration of all further motions on the agenda be deferred to the next meeting.

The procedural motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

DECISION

That consideration of all further motions as printed in the agenda be deferred until the next ordinary meeting of the Council, namely:

- **12.12 Recorded Votes**

- **12.13 Dignity Code for nurses and care workers for the elderly**
- **12.14 Recession**

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

13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

[Note: The resolution to exclude the press and public did not need to be adopted as the Section 2 minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16th May 2012 and 18th June 2012 had been agreed at item 3 above.]

14. EXEMPT MINUTES

DECISION

That the exempt minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting on 16th May 2012 and the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 18th June 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

The meeting ended at 11.10 p.m.