

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2013

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Rania Khan, Shiria Khatun, Ahmed Omer and Kosru Uddin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. Councillor Shafiqul Haque declared a personal interest in Question 8.25 as his son was employed in Skillsmatch.

3. MINUTES

DECISION

That the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 17 April 2013 and the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 22 May 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

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

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

No announcements were made at the meeting.

5. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS

5.1 Petition against the closure of the Isle of Dogs Police Station

Petition withdrawn.

5.2 Petition against Casinos and Betting Shops in Tower Hamlets

A representative of Kelly Begum addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor, then responded to the petition.

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)

Procedural motion

Councillor Ohid Ahmed **moved**, and Councillor Gulam Robbani **seconded**, a procedural motion – “That Procedure Rule 13.1 be suspended to allow consideration of an emergency motion on casinos.”

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

Members voting in favour of the procedural motion requested that their votes be recorded in the minutes.

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

5.3 Petition regarding benefit cuts and the ‘bedroom tax’

Ms Eileen Short 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 petition.

DECISION

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

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

6. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 6.1 Question from Mr Muhammed Haque regarding arrangements for auditing and overseeing the conduct of bodies now responsible for formerly Council-owned and Council controlled housing stock.
- 6.2 Question from Mrs Janet Wade requesting information on the amended Open Spaces Strategy and requesting limitations on events held in Council parks.
- 6.3 Question from Mr Steven Barthram requesting a breakdown of money spent on the regeneration of Roman Road market area.

- 6.4 Question from Mr Syed Akamot Ali regarding the reinstatement of the lavatory in Whitechapel Market and improvements needed to the market environment.
- 6.5 Question from Mr Nic Bentley regarding public consultation around Thames Water's proposal for a Thames Tideway Tunnel site at Highway Business Park, Heckford Street.
- 6.6 Question from Ms Kathy McTasney regarding Council support for residents affected by the Bedroom Tax. (Question withdrawn.)
- 6.7 Question from Mr Omar Sharif regarding the conduct of Councillors during Council meetings.
- 6.8 Question from Mr Yousuf Khan regarding the work of the Students Rights organisation on university campuses.
- 6.9 Question from Mr Abjol Miah regarding the murder in Woolwich and subsequent reprisals by the EDL.

Questions 6.1 to 6.4, and in each case a supplementary question, were put and responded to by the relevant Executive Member. Question 6.6 was withdrawn. Questions 6.5 and 6.7 to 6.9 were not considered due to lack of time. Written responses will be provided to the questioners.

(Action by: John S. Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services – to arrange written responses)

NOTE: During consideration of question 6.1, the Speaker adjourned the meeting at 8.25 p.m., reconvening at 8.41 p.m., due to disruption in the public gallery.

Procedural motion

Following consideration of question 6.2, Councillor Timothy Archer **moved**, and Councillor David Snowdon **seconded**, a procedural motion - "That under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow motion 12.10 (Motion regarding Parks and Open Spaces) to be considered as next business."

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

Procedural motion

Following consideration of question 6.4, Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded** a procedural motion – "That Procedure Rule 13.1 be suspended to allow consideration of an urgent motion on the Comprehensive Spending Review as the next item of business."

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

Urgent motion: Comprehensive Spending Review

Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded**, a tabled urgent motion on the Comprehensive Spending Review as set out below.

After debate, the motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes:

- Britain's economy has flatlined for over two years, with nearly one million young people out of work.
- Under the Tories we have had the slowest recovery for 100 years.
- Prices are still going up faster than wages.
- The IMF have called on the Government to boost infrastructure.
- The next Government is now forecast to inherit borrowing of £96bn in 2015, when George Osborne said it would be just £18bn.
- Instead of coming down, the deficit is set to be the same next year as it was this year and last year. And no growth means the Government is set to borrow £245 billion more than planned.
- Today's Comprehensive Spending Review saw the Government announce further cuts of 2% to local authority budgets in 2015/16.
- Last Sunday 141 Local Authority Leaders united to co-sign a cross-party open letter to the Observer calling for a halt to government cuts to local authority budgets, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets failed to join this call.
- In its first three years the Tory-led Government has spent £5.4 billion less in capital investment when compared to the plans inherited from Labour.
- The Government's decision last year to introduce a Strivers' Tax by cutting the support for 14,000 working families in Tower Hamlets means ordinary people are picking up the bill for the cost of George Osborne's economic failure.

- As a result of measures announced in the Autumn Statement a one earner couple with children will be on average £534 a year worse off by the end of the Parliament.

This Council believes:

- For ordinary people life is getting harder. The Government is failing to turn things around. While the Tories say the economy is healing, for most families it's getting worse with prices rising faster than wages. Britain can't afford to go on like this.
- Today's Spending Review should have been an opportunity to boost jobs and growth now and for the future, which would have been the best way to reduce the scale of the cuts the government plans for public services in 2015-16.
- Cutting taxes by an average of £100,000 for 13,000 people earning over one million pounds shows the misguided priorities of the Conservative led Government.
- David Cameron is more interested in exploiting the challenges the country faces than solving them, dividing the country, between north and south, public and private, and between those who can work and those who cannot.
- The Government is failing to stand up to the banks, from bonuses to the interest rate scandal. Whilst at the same time standing aside and failing to take action to tackle youth unemployment, with no plan for the forgotten 50% who don't go to university.

This Council further believes:

- Whilst the Council remains opposed to the Government's cuts to local government budgets, the Mayor has a duty to manage the Council's finances efficiently, delivering a balanced budget to ensure long term stability of services for residents;
- The Mayor's budget agreed in March shows that the council will be spending £39m more than it will be receiving in 2015-2016, with £25m of this currently unfunded;
- The unfunded gap in 2016/17 is estimated to be £55m
- The Mayor's key spending priorities amount to a further £10m that end in 2014/15 and therefore continuing these would require a further £10m of savings on top.

This Council Resolves:

- To condemn the Conservative led Government's failure to get growth into the economy.
- To support Labour's alternative plan marrying iron discipline with a focus on growth and securing a lasting difference for all in our society.
- To call upon the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to set out a sustainable plan to protect the long-term finances of the Council.

(Action by: Chris Holme, interim Corporate Director, Resources)

Procedural motion

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman **moved**, and Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed **seconded**, a procedural motion – "That Procedure Rule 13.1 be suspended to allow consideration of an emergency motion on the use of the Mayor's car as the next item of business."

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

Urgent motion: Use of the Mayor's Car

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman **moved**, and Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed **seconded**, a tabled urgent motion on the use of the Mayor's car, as set out below.

After debate, the motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council Notes:

- The Channel 4 Dispatches programme which revealed worrying practices related to the Mayor's use of his Council funded car.
- The East London Advertiser article of the 19th June entitled "Channel 4 Dispatches challenged over its filming of Tower Hamlets mayor" which revealed that the Mayor threatened legal action against Channel 4
- The Mayor and the Council's responsibility to provide best value for money for taxpayers.
- The Mayor's Office response to the allegations in the programme:
1. £71 for a taxi fare of 400m
In response to a Freedom of Information request that revealed exorbitantly high taxi costs, the Mayor ordered a review of travel arrangements. It is our opinion that the taxi company may be

overcharging passengers.

2. Driver waits outside Lutfur's house for 30 minutes (12:55pm)

The driver has been a salaried member of staff for many years, serving under several successive administrations. The 30 minutes waiting time will not have resulted in any extra cost to the taxpayer.

3. Drives to the Mosque for Friday prayers

The Mosque is a key community hub. The Mayor regularly goes to Friday prayers after which he is accessible to residents, meets with local residents and discusses their concerns.

We have examples of casework raised by the Mayor following this visit.

4. Circles for 1:30 hours

The driver has been a salaried member of staff for many years, serving under several successive administrations. The 1:30 hours' driving time will not have resulted in any extra cost to the taxpayer.

We also believe that the cost of petrol for the time spent "circling" is less than parking charges for the equivalent time.

5. Takes Lutfur to Zaza's grill

This was a working lunch with local residents and organisations.

6. Double parks in a bus lane

Clearly this is not ideal; however our understanding is that the car was only in the bus lane for a matter of minutes. There is no evidence that this constituted an offence under the Highways Act.

7. Waits for 1:35 hours

The 1:35 hours' driving time will not have resulted in any extra cost to the taxpayer.

8. Waits outside house for 20 minutes

The driver has been a salaried member of staff for many years, serving under several successive administrations. The 1:30 hours' driving time did not result in any extra cost to the taxpayer.

9. Drives Lutfur to the East London Mosque (0.2 miles)

The Mosque is a key community hub. The Mosque is a key community hub. The Mayor regularly goes to Friday prayers after which he is accessible to residents, meets local residents and discusses their concerns.

We have examples of casework raised by the Mayor following this visit.

10. Waits outside Mosque for 2 hours and six minutes before leaving (no mention of whether Lutfur goes with)

The driver has been a salaried member of staff for many years, serving under several successive administrations. 2 hours' driving time will not have resulted in any extra cost to the taxpayer. The Mayor also

attended the funeral of the mother of a councillor colleague.

11. Saturday, driver “delivered” 2 bundles dry cleaning

The Mayor’s wife transferred the dry cleaning from her own car to the Mayor’s car the previous night. The driver merely gave the Mayor this dry cleaning.

12. Waits for 28 minutes before taking Lutfur to Battle of Atlantic Memorial

The driver arrived early, taking the Mayor to Trinity Square Gardens, a significant distance from his home.”

This Council Believes:

- The questionable usage of the Mayor’s car raised in the programme reflects badly upon the borough and damages the reputation of the Council.
- That there are serious concerns raised by the response offered by the Mayor’s office including on the following basis:
 - o No taxi should ever have been approved for a 400m journey, especially not with a £71 charge. This shows a failure of auditing within the management of the Mayor’s office and a failure of responsibility from the councillor involved.
 - o In total over the short time period covered by Dispatches the Mayor justified almost 7 hours of wasted employee time by having his driver wait for him.
 - o The Mayor’s justification that there was no cost to the taxpayer is both disingenuous and wrong as paying an officer to wait around for the Mayor is an undeniable waste of public money when that officer could be performing other duties.
 - o Not only is double parking in a bus lane ‘not ideal’ it is illegal and a traffic offence. Elected politicians should observe the highest standards and set an example, not flout the rules they expect others to live by.
 - o The Mayor should not need a driver to take him to a venue 0.2m from his home to the East London Mosque especially when the driver then has to wait for two hours.

This Council further believes:

- That threatening legal action at the cost of the tax payer against Channel 4 not only further undermines the reputation of the borough

but also represents another potential waste of tax payer money.

This Council resolves:

- To condemn the Mayor for his wasteful use of tax payer money.
- To ask the 151 officer to review the business case and public value for money discerned from the retention of the Mayor's private car and report back to the next full Council meeting.
- To welcome Labour Mayoral Candidate John Biggs' pledge to do away with the Mayoral car upon his election and redeploy the mayoral driver to other duties.

(**Action by:** Chris Holme, interim Corporate Director, Resources)

7. **MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor made his report to the Council meeting. As part of his report the Mayor invited the Deputy Mayor to address the Council about the recent award that the Council had received for its work in preparing for the London Olympics 2012.

The Leader of the Majority Group and Leaders of the Minority Groups each responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Procedural motion

At this point, Councillor Fozol Miah **moved**, and Councillor Harun Miah **seconded**, a procedural motion – "That under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow motion 12.5 (Motion regarding the rise of Islamophobia) to be considered as next business."

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

Motion 12.5: Motion regarding the rise of Islamophobia

Councillor Harun Miah **moved**, and Councillor Fozol Miah **seconded** motion 12.5 as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Fozol Miah indicated that he had tabled an amendment to motion 12.5 as set out below. Councillor Harun Miah accepted the amendment and altered his motion accordingly.

Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded**, a tabled amendment to the motion, incorporating the text of motions 12.2, 12.4 and 12.5 (as amended) into a single motion as below.

Councillor Shahed Ali proposed that the existing second bullet point in Councillor Islam's amendment should become the third point and vice versa. This was accepted by Councillors Islam and Saunders who altered their amendment accordingly.

Councillor Abdul Asad proposed that the first resolution shown in motion 12.5 should be amended to remove the reference to Rushanara Ali, MP and be re-worded: "That all Group Leaders and the Mayor jointly write to the Home Secretary requesting she take steps to ban the EDL march and ensure that our community is fully protected from the EDL and other extremists." This was accepted by Councillors Sirajul Islam and Rachael Saunders who altered their amendment accordingly.

After debate, Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded**, a procedural motion – "That under Procedure Rule 14.1.10 the question be now put." The procedural motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The amendment as tabled by Councillors Sirajul Islam and Rachael Saunders and subsequently amended as above, was put to the vote and was unanimously **agreed**.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was unanimously **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council Notes:

- Offers its sympathies to the family and friends of Lee Rigby. To try to use a warped view of any religion or faith to justify his murder is wrong, and cannot be tolerated.
- Is deeply concerned about attacks on Islamic buildings and threats to the safety of individuals and communities.
- Calls for unity against the EDL, BNP and others who seek to stir up hatred and division. We are at our strongest when we are united, as we must be in the face of this attack in our neighbouring borough of Greenwich.
- Notes the EDL threat to demonstrate in Tower Hamlets on the 26th August 2013 and that the Labour Group immediately wrote to the Mayor and all Group leaders asking them to join with us in opposing the march.
- Notes that John Biggs AM, Labour Group and local MPs have written to the Home Secretary and Borough Commander raising their concerns and asking for support for a ban on any march.
- Supports a ban on the EDL marching through our borough.

This Council also notes:

- Cllr Alibor Choudhury and Cllr Harun Miah's motions on the EDL:

12.4 Motion regarding the EDL

Proposer: Councillor Alibor Choudhury

Seconder: Councillor Kabir Ahmed

This Council agrees:

- There can be no justification for the brutal murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich on 22 May. We send our condolences to his family and friends.*
- Racist and fascists are attempting to exploit the actions of a few to whip up racism and direct hatred against all Muslims. Since Woolwich there has been a 700% increase in the numbers of reported Islamophobic incidents, including the burning down of the Islamic Cultural Centre in Muswell Hill.*
- We do not hold Norwegian Christians responsible for the actions of the fascist Anders Breivik, whose 2011 rampage left 77 dead.*
- We do not hold white people collectively responsible for Timothy McVeigh, the US neo-Nazi whose 1995 Oklahoma City bomb killed 168 people, or for David Copeland, the former BNP member who planted bombs across London in 1999. Nor should anyone suggest that Britain's Muslims are collectively responsible for the 22 May attack.*
- We call on the media and politicians to stop using inflammatory language that feeds the fascists and racists. We must challenge Islamophobia wherever it raises its head.*
- We must reject those who want to divide our communities and set them against each other, and stand fast to the ideals of anti-racism, multiculturalism and respect for all.*

And:

12.5 Motion regarding The Rise of Islamophobia

Proposer: Councillor Harun Miah

Seconder: Councillor Fozol Miah

This Council notes:

- 1. There has been a dramatic rise in Islamophobic attacks in London since the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich*
- 2. These attacks have included arson attacks on mosques and Islamic schools, the tearing of headscarfs from women, spitting and verbal insults*

This Council deplores the murder of Lee Rigby and the Islamophobic attacks that have followed that murder

3. The EDL had planned to march through Tower Hamlets and Newham this coming Saturday 29th June

4. The Leaders of the EDL now claim that they are merely “walking for charity” but have invited EDL members and supporters to join then on this “walk” and that this “walk” may take them through Tower Hamlets and Newham

This Council believes:

This Council believes that the EDL “walk” is still a march and that the purpose of this march is to incite racial hatred and violence in general and Islamophobia in particular.

This Council asks the Mayor

1. To do all in his power to ensure that the authorities, including the police and the government, deter these Islamophobic attacks and seeks to counter this tide of Islamophobia

2. To declare that the EDL and the BNP continue to be unwelcome in Tower Hamlets as they seek to inflame racial hatred

3. To declare that he will seek to secure a ban against any attempts by racist organisations like the EDL and BNP to march in Tower Hamlets

4. To seek an urgent ban on any attempt by the EDL to march or otherwise parade through Tower Hamlets and Newham this coming Saturday 29th June

This Council resolves:

- That all Group Leaders and the Mayor jointly write to the Home Secretary requesting that she take steps to ban the EDL march and ensure that our community is fully protected from the EDL and other extremists.*
- To work with community organisations, faith groups, local people and the police to maintain calm and safety in our community.*
- To call on the independent Mayor and all councillors to unite against all forms of extremism and racism.*

(Action by: Fran Jones, One Tower Hamlets Service Manager)

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

8.1 Question from Councillor Mizanur Chaudhury re: proposed fire station cuts.

The above question and a supplementary question were put and were responded to by the relevant Executive Member.

Questions 8.2 to 8.28 were not put as, following the changes to the order of business below, the time limit for the meeting had expired. Written responses will be provided to each question.

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

Procedural motion

Following consideration of Question 8.1, Councillor Carli Harper-Penman **moved**, and Councillor Bill Turner **seconded**, a procedural motion – “That under Procedure Rule 14.1.3 the order of business be varied to allow motion 12.8 to be considered as next business.”

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

Motion 12.8: Motion against Boris Johnson’s Tower Hamlets Fire Cuts

Councillor Shahed Ali **moved**, and Councillor Kabir Ahmed **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Carli Harper-Penman **moved**, and Councillor Rajib Ahmed **seconded**, a tabled amendment to the motion as set out below.

After debate, the tabled amendment was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes:

1. The deplorable decision by the Mayor of London to proceed with budget cuts that would see Bow fire station closed and the number of fire engines at Whitechapel fire station halved.
2. The plans to close Bow fire station and reduce the number of engines at Whitechapel fire station to one, would remove one geographically important base as well as reducing the borough’s fire response teams by almost 25%.
3. Whilst fire call outs across London are reducing Tower Hamlets has by far the highest level of call outs in the capital. Cutting the capacity of two of our fire stations against this backdrop would put lives at risk. The Draft Fifth London Safety Plan states that deprivation is an issue but then

proposes closure in an area of high deprivation. This leaves the plan open to questions on the validity and degree of consideration and risk assessment that has gone into the proposals. If the method of assessment has not changed, we believe that questions could be raised as to how the cuts can be justified.

4. If implemented these cuts would mean that response times for some areas of Tower Hamlets would dramatically exceed LFEPA targets with some response times doubling to over 7 minutes. The area served by Bow fire station contains 64 blocks of flats, 20 of which are above 10 stories, and Bow itself suffers from narrow roads and traffic congestion.
5. Areas such as Bow, which will be most affected by the proposed changes, are home to a large number of densely populated tower blocks where fire can spread quickly to other floors trapping residents. Even modestly increased response times to these areas could end in tragedy. There is also a high number of elderly people who reside in Bow, adding further need for quicker response times.
6. Proposed station closures across the border in Newham and Hackney would also have a significant impact should a major incident occur in the borough.

This Council Further Notes:

1. The motion on fire and police station closures proposed by Cllr Abdal Ullah and passed by Council on 23 January this year.
2. The numerous press and community campaigning activities undertaken by Labour councillors, MPs and London Assembly member John Biggs.
3. That Labour MP Rushanara Ali and Labour Assembly Member John Biggs met the Mayor of London on Monday the 17th June to personally lobby his against the cuts to fire stations in Tower Hamlets.
4. The three public consultation meetings held in Tower Hamlets, all of which were arranged, attended, promoted and addressed by Labour councillors.
5. That no independent or Tory councillors nor the Mayor attended the public consultation meeting on the fire service cuts.
6. Labour Group's submission to the LFEPA consultation on the changes to fire services in London.
7. That Labour councillors have consistently campaigned across the community with residents, fire fighters, unions and others against Boris

Johnson's fire station cuts.

8. That the Mayor of Tower Hamlets has issued press statements and attended photo ops but has failed to attend the three most important meetings on the fire station closures where he had the opportunity to use his position to make a real difference to fire and police cuts plans:
 - a. The LFEPA public consultation meeting on the 7th May.
 - b. The meeting of the London Councils Leader's Committee on Tuesday 12th February with Deputy Mayor of London for Crime Stephen Greenhalgh,
 - c. The meeting of the London Councils Leader's Committee on Tuesday 13th November with London Fire Authority Chief James Cleverly AM.

This Council believes:

1. That the Mayor of London's plans to shut 17 fire stations and axe 600 jobs will have a devastating impact on fire safety across London and Tower Hamlets.
2. That the plans to close of stations in Bow and Whitechapel, putting residents' safety at risk.
3. That the Mayor of Tower Hamlets has failed to effectively stand up for residents by not attending key high level consultation meetings where he had a personal opportunity to put residents' points to regional decision makers.

This Council resolves:

1. To write to the Mayor of London in formal support of and enclosing a copy of the Labour Group submission to the LFEPA consultation.
2. To condemn the Mayor of Tower Hamlets for failing to attend key consultation meetings at which he could have made a strong case for Tower Hamlets residents directly to the decision makers.

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

Extension of time limit for the meeting

Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded**, a procedural motion – "That under Procedure Rule 15.11.7 the meeting be extended for up to an additional 30 minutes to enable consideration of agenda items 9.1, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 12.6, 12.9 and 12.12."

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

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

9.1 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DECISION

That the report be noted.

(Action by: Louise Russell, Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality)

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

There was no business under this item.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Localism Act 2011 Standards Regime: Appointment of 'Independent Person'

The Council considered the report of the Service Head, Democratic Services on the above matter.

Following debate, Councillor Carlo Gibbs **moved**, and Councillor Abdal Ullah **seconded**, a procedural motion – “That under Procedure Rule 14.1.10 the question be now put.”

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

The report recommendations were put to the vote and were **agreed** unanimously.

DECISION

1. That Ms Elizabeth Hall be appointed as the Independent Person with effect from 1st July 2013 for a term of office of three years.
2. That Ms Ezra Zahabi be appointed as the Reserve Independent Person with effect from 1st July 2013 for a term of office of three years.
3. That the remuneration for the Independent Person and Reserve Independent Person be set at the level of £117 for each matter on which they are required to provide advice and for each attendance at a committee meeting or training event that is required in connection with the role, as set out at section 6 to the report of the Service Head, Democratic Services.

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

11.2 Report of the Executive in accordance with section 20 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules

DECISION

That the report be noted.

11.3 Delegation of Powers to the Head of Paid Service - Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Chief Officers

The Council considered the reference from the Human Resources Committee on the above matter.

Following debate, Councillor Abdal Ullah **moved**, and Councillor Carlo Gibbs **seconded**, a procedural motion – “That under Procedure Rule 14.1.10 the question be now put.”

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

The recommendations of the Human Resources Committee were then put to the vote and were **agreed**.

DECISION

That the Head of Paid Service be delegated power to exercise the functions of the Chief Executive for the purposes of the agreed Disciplinary Policy and Procedures for Chief Officers.

(**Action by:** Simon Kilbey, Service Head, Human Resources and Workforce Development)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.6 Motion regarding 4 in 10 Campaign for London’s Overcrowded Children

Councillor Abdal Ullah moved, and Councillor John Pierce seconded, the motion as printed on the agenda, subject to the deletion of the words ‘local Labour Party members and’ in the 2nd bullet point under ‘This Council Resolves’.

Following debate Councillor Abdal Ullah **moved**, and Councillor Carlo Gibbs **seconded**, a procedural motion – “That under Procedure Rule 14.1.10 the question be now put.”

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

The motion as printed on the agenda and as amended above was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes that:

- 391,000 children are estimated to be growing up in overcrowded conditions in London – a quarter of the Capital’s children, including tens of thousands living in Tower Hamlets;
- This figure has risen by around 80,000 in the past decade and it set to get worse as the supply of new social housing dries up.
- The Conservative led government has led a sustained attack on social housing, including cutting funding for building and attacking social security.
- Only 134 of the 1,618 applicants for four bedroom social housing in the borough were catered for in 2012, with only 16 of those in properties owned by Tower Hamlets Council directly.
- Research has shown that overcrowding undermines a child’s health, education and well-being, damaging their long-term life chances;
- The Mayor of London “Overcrowding Action Plan” sets a target to reduce the number of severely overcrowded households by just 5,500 by 2016;
- Save the Children’s 4in10 campaign is calling on the Mayor of London to commit to halve the number of children growing up in overcrowded conditions by 2020.

This Council believes

- The only solution to London’s housing crisis is a significant and sustained increase in investment in new social rented housing, including council housing, for overcrowded and homeless families;
- The 4in10 campaign is right to focus political attention on the Mayor of London as his “Action Plan” is an inadequate response and fails to make tackling overcrowding a real political priority.

This Council resolves,

- To support the 4in10 campaign and call on the Mayor of London to make a commitment to halve the number of children in overcrowded homes by 2020;

- To publicise the campaign to residents to help raise public awareness of this problem and pressure on the Mayor of London to act.
- To call on the Independent Mayor of Tower Hamlets to keep his promises to local people, and deliver family sized homes.

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

12.9 Motion regarding Commercial Events in Victoria Park

Councillor Amy Whitelock moved, and Councillor Marc Francis seconded, the motion as printed on the agenda.

Following debate Councillor Bill Turner **moved**, and Councillor Abdal Ullah **seconded**, a procedural motion – “That under Procedure Rule 14.1.10 the question be now put.”

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

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

DECISION

This Council Notes:

1. The motion passed by Council on the 16th May 2012 which resolved to amend the Open Spaces Strategy to include a section on Commercial Events in parks, to reflect the prior decisions of Council, that limits the number of events in Victoria Park to 6 days each year, prevents the park being used for commercial events on consecutive weekends, set a closing time for events to 10pm and a reduced noise limit for commercial events, and prevents commercial events being held in Sir John McDougal Gardens, Millwall Park, Island Gardens and the gardens at Trinity Square;
2. That over 400 local residents signed a petition presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, calling for the number of events to be reduced;
3. That no amended Open Spaces Strategy has been presented to Council even though it is included in the list of policies reserved for Council who have expressed a will to see the policy amended;
4. The serious damage done to the park by last summer’s commercial events and the continued degradation of the park during Field Day and AS ONE in May 2013;
5. The Mayor has allowed an increased 50,000 capacity for this year’s commercial events, which has resulted in even more of the eastern half

of the park being cordoned off from use by the public and damage to the park's fabric and grassed areas for the rest of the summer;

6. More than 400 criminal offences were recorded at Field Day and Lovebox events last year;
7. The Mayor has recently authorised a tendering process to rent out Victoria Park for up to ten events each year in 2014, 2015 and 2016;
8. The London Borough of Hackney recently decided against agreeing a programme of multiple events on Hackney Marshes each summer after a majority of residents there opposed those plans.

This Council Believes:

1. That the Mayor should respect the democratic mandate of the Council and the wishes of residents and bring forward a revised Open Spaces Strategy which reflects the stated position of Council;
2. That the Mayor's failure to do so is clearly designed to circumvent the Council's democratic process and commit this authority to contractual arrangements with commercial companies without proper scrutiny;
3. The Mayor has no mandate to commit LBTH to a contract for the hiring of Victoria Park for commercial events beyond May 2014;
4. LBTH should use the full force of the law to recover any legal costs incurred in renegotiating a three-year contract entered into by the Mayor and Cabinet Members from those authorising it.

This Council Resolves:

1. That the Mayor should immediately suspend the tendering process for commercial events in Victoria Park;
2. The Mayor should authorise meaningful consultation with residents and other stakeholders about the scale of commercial activity within Victoria Park;
3. The Mayor should in the meantime bring forward a renewed Open Spaces Strategy to the next ordinary Council meeting, including within it the amendments set out above, to ensure a more balanced approach to commercial events while the consultation is being carried out.

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

12.12 Motion regarding Garment Workers

Councillor Rachael Saunders **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded**, the motion as printed on the agenda.

After debate, the motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

DECISION

This Council notes the terrible loss of life in the recent factory collapse in Bangladesh. While there may be many underlying reasons for this disaster, and the Government and its agencies in Bangladesh need to continue to investigate and to hold those responsible to account, and while the rapid economic growth in sectors such as the garment industry in Bangladesh is to be welcomed, and is an important providers of wealth and employment, the event also highlights the challenging working conditions of workers in many developing economies.

This Council resolves:

1. To support and encourage closer relationships between local government bodies in the UK and Bangladesh in order that good practice and experience can be shared.
2. To ensure that it follows ethical procurement policies in its contracts, and to support campaign organisations and trade unions that promote ethical procurement and which can help to promote good employment practice and safe working conditions without stifling economic growth.
3. To encourage others, more widely but in particular in our borough, and including in Tower Hamlets schools, to follow ethical procurement guidelines.
4. To congratulate those bodies and individuals in Tower Hamlets and beyond who have helped to raise funds and support to assist those affected by the disaster.

(Action by: Chris Holme, interim Corporate Director, Resources)

Motions 12.1, 12.3, 12.7, 12.10, 12.11, 12.13, 12.14, 12.15, 12.16, 12.17 and 12.18 were not considered due to the time limit for the meeting being reached.

The meeting ended at 11.15 p.m.