

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2015

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

NOTE: AGENDA ORDER.

During the meeting the Council agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the Decision Sheet is presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda. Urgent Motions, moved with the agreement of the Council without notice, are listed at Item 13.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Helal Uddin
- Councillor Suluk Ahmed
- Councillor Joshua Peck
- Councillor Shahed Ali
- Councillor Shafiqul Haque
- Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Harun Miah declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5.3, 'Petition calling on the Mayor and Council to support the businesses of Chapman Street' as he was a business leaseholder in the area. He indicated that he would leave the meeting for the consideration of this matter.

Councillors Denise Jones, Candida Ronald and Asma Begum declared a personal interest in Agenda items 12.1 Motion regarding the Rich Mix Cultural Foundation and Member Question 8.2 on the same matter as they were Council appointed Board Members of the Rich Mix Cultural Foundation.

3. MINUTES

DECISION

That the unrestricted minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th September 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

(Action by: Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services)

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

Please see the minutes.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**5.1 Petition calling for a 30 MPH speed limit along the A12 Blackwall Tunnel Approach.**

Ms Juliana Ben Salem addressed the meeting in support of the petition, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment, then responded to the matters raised in 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)

5.2 Petition in support of opening an Idea Store at Bethnal Green Road, E2.

Petition not considered due to the absence of the petitioner.

5.3 Petition calling on the Mayor and Council to support the businesses of Chapman Street.

Mr Matthew Wood addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners and responded to questions from Members. Mayor John Biggs then responded to the matters raised in 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

The following questions and in each case (except where indicated) supplementary questions were put and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member:-

- 6.1 Question from Ms Lillian Collins on progress in completing Poplar Baths. (No supplementary question was put).
- 6.2 Question from Mr Ahmed Hussain requesting that the Council support the freeholders of Alpha Grove, E14 to purchase amenity space and garages within the freeholding area.
- 6.3 Question from Mr Jamir Chowdhury on efforts to get more women into employment, particularly from the BME community.
- 6.4 Question from Mr Michael James regarding the current programme for Landlord Licensing Scheme.
- 6.5 Question from Mr Owen Corrigan on tackling hate crime in the Borough.
- 6.6 Question from Mr Sean Michael about the rights of East Thames Housing Association to evict residents at short notice and the support available for the tenants.

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented his report to the Council. The Leaders of the other political groups then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

- 8.1 Question from Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed about the number of families placed by the Council in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
- 8.3 Question from Councillor Amina Ali to the Mayor enquiring about the next steps for the Civic Centre. (No supplementary question was put)
- 8.4 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman on the future of the East End Life Magazine.
- 8.5 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell about the Council's plans for early years services.
- 8.6 Question from Councillor Oliur Rahman to the Mayor regarding TUSH Housing (62 Bruce Road).
- 8.7 Question from Councillor Marc Francis about the Council's response to the recent Care Quality Commission inspection of Pat Shaw House.

- 8.8 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood on the progress of the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework, launched by the Greater London Authority.
- 8.9 Question from Councillor Dave Chesterton to the Mayor on his plans to review controlled parking in the borough.
- 8.10 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan regarding Council support for domestic abuse victims.

Question 8.2 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. The remaining questions 8.11 - 8.25 were not put due to a lack of time. Written responses would be provided to the questions.

(**Action by:**—Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services to arrange written responses)

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

There was no business to transact under this agenda item.

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

There was no business to transact under this agenda item.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no business to transact under this agenda item.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.3 Motion regarding the Civic Centre

Mayor John Biggs **moved**, and Councillor Sirajul Islam **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Rabina Khan **moved**, and Councillor Ohid Ahmed **seconded** an amendment to add the following point at the end of the motion.

“The Council agrees to set up a ‘Community and Stakeholder Group’ comprising of the local traders, businesses and the community group within the proximity of the new Civic Centre, as part of the award-winning Whitechapel Vision to ensure that the project implementation and management benefits from a comprehensive input by key local stakeholders.”

The amendment was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

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

DECISION

The Council notes that:

1. The lease on the current Mulberry Place Headquarters building expires in June 2020;
2. The facilities offered at Mulberry Place and associated Council offices including Albert Jacob House and John Onslow House are ageing and need to be updated
3. Mulberry Place is located at the extreme eastern end of the Borough
4. The review of options for a new civic centre undertaken since July 2015 has provided the opportunity to scrutinise proposals for a new civic headquarters as part of the former Royal London Hospital development and other options to determine which of these will offer best value for money, ensures a twenty first century working environment for staff delivering services to residents and provides a suitable location for the conduct of civic business
5. The retention of all existing One Stop Shops and Ideas Stores along with consideration of facilities in the Bethnal Green and Isle of Dogs areas of the Borough is an essential part of this proposal to ensure a strong local presence across all the geographical areas of the Borough.

Having considered the options, the Council welcomes the decision of the Mayor in Cabinet on 3 November 2015 to agree the former Royal London Hospital site in Whitechapel as the preferred location for the new civic centre and endorses the Mayor's subsequent decisions to enable the speediest implementation of this major project.

The Council further endorses the Mayor's proposal to establish a cross party reference group to keep the development of the civic centre under review and to provide regular updates to the Council.

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

12.10 Motion regarding the Trade Union Bill

Councillor Clare Harrisson **moved**, and Councillor Rachael Saunders **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

DECISION

This Council notes that:

1. In February 2015 the United Nations agency, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), reaffirmed its belief that 'without protecting a right to strike, Freedom of Association, in particular the right to organise activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers' interests, cannot be fully realised.'
2. In July 2015 the Conservative government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions and their members to make it

harder to win ballots for industrial action. This will only be lawful if there is a 50% turnout among trade union members entitled to vote in addition to a simple majority voting for industrial action.

3. The Conservatives seek a further requirement for those working in 'important public services' to secure the support of 40% of all trade union members. Non-voters will be counted as 'against' industrial action which is contrary to ILO guidance. This means that on a 50% turnout, 80% will have to vote for industrial action for it to be lawful in many public services.
4. No such thresholds apply to elections in local government, for police and crime commissioners, or in European or Westminster elections.
5. The government has refused the request of trade unions to make electronic balloting legally permissible and increase turnout this way.

This Council further notes that:

1. The proposed Conservative legislation will also introduce greater restrictions for picketing.
2. These include requirements on unions to inform the police of the name of a picket supervisor and ensure they have a letter of authorisation that they must be required to carry, inform the police of how many members will be expected to attend a picket line and what banners or materials will be used as well as to notify the police of details of how trade unions intend to use social media during a dispute.
3. The Conservative government wants to remove the ban for employers to employ agency workers during a period of lawful industrial action.
4. The government wants to grant Ministers the power to reduce the amount of facilities time agreed by employers and the workforce which is in place to ensure adequate workplace representation.
5. Trade unions take industrial action for a wide range of reasons including defending wages and pensions, conditions at work as well as health and safety.

This Council believes that:

1. The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights which should be respected in a free and democratic society.
2. The Conservative government's bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions to trade union members.
3. Workplace representation ensures access to justice and has benefits across whole organisations.
4. The government's Trade Union Bill is part of a disturbing trend to erode civil liberties and inhibit the right to speak out or protest against the government.
5. The Conservative government's Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider civil society.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the council's opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations.
2. Support the TUC and civil liberties groups in campaigning to defend the right to strike and oppose the Trade Union Bill.
3. Continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.

Under Procedure Rule 17.6, Councillor Peter Golds and Councillor Chris Chapman requested that it be recorded that they voted against this motion.

(Action by: Mayor's Office)

Motions 12.1- 12.2, 12.4– 12.9 and 12- 11 were not debated due to lack of time.

13. URGENT MOTIONS

The Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to enable the following urgent motion to be debated without notice:

13.1 Urgent Motion regarding the Paris Attacks

Mayor John Biggs **moved**, and Councillors Oliur Rahman and Peter Golds **seconded**, the motion as **tabled**.

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

DECISION

This Council notes:

- The shocking multiple attacks in Paris on Friday 13th November 2015, in which 129 people were killed and hundreds injured.
- That council staff held a one-minute silence on Monday 16th November at 11am, as other tributes were held across Europe.
- That the world has witnessed vile and cowardly terror attacks – in Beirut, Baghdad and Paris. We hope all those responsible are identified, detained and face the full force of justice.

This Council believes:

- The attacks in Paris were horrific and abhorrent and we condemn this violence in the strongest possible terms.

- That our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the attacks, their families and loved ones, our French neighbours and all innocent victims of terror and war.

This Council resolves:

- That a cross-party letter be written to the Mayor of Paris to express our condolences, thoughts and prayers – along with a copy of this motion.
- That we will always stand firm against the politics of hate in all its forms, wherever and however it manifests itself.

(Action by: Mayor's Office/Melanie Clay, Director of Law, Probity and Governance)

13.2 Motion Regarding Somaliland's right to be recognised as a sovereign state

Councillor Anima Ali **moved**, and Mayor John Biggs **seconded**, the motion as **tabled**.

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was **agreed**

DECISION

This Council notes:

1. The first Somalilanders living in England settled in Tower Hamlets as early as the 19th century, working as seafarers on the local docks in this borough.
2. Many of the early Somaliland settlers settled in Cable Street, where in the 1930s along with the Jewish and other local communities they fought against fascism when Mosley's black shirts marched through Tower Hamlets ready to divide communities.
3. That Somalilanders merchant seafarers went on to fight for Britain from their base in Tower Hamlets during the first and second world wars, many losing their lives for King and country. After the war years the small Somaliland community worked hard to continue to contribute to the economy of Tower Hamlets.
4. Somaliland declared independence from the Republic of Somalia in 1991 following a long war.
5. That Somaliland has never been recognised by the UN or the African Union despite a campaign by its politicians, diplomats and prominent citizens.
6. The Somaliland government does not receive international aid and it has kept its waters free from piracy.

This Council believes:

1. That Somalilanders have made a significant contribution to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Somali-landers are the one of the oldest communities in Tower Hamlets.

2. That Somalilanders have contributed to the local economic and cultural makeup of Tower Hamlets becoming proud members of this borough.
3. The Somaliland community in Tower Hamlets has continued to have strong cultural and economic links with Somaliland and has been a strong voice in the advocacy for an independent Somaliland.
4. That this council should be strongly urged to support the growing pressure to recognise Somaliland as an independent state allowing it a seat at the United Nations
5. That this council should recognise the strength of the Somaliland's cause and the fact that it is a stable democracy with four successful and peaceful elections over the past two decades, with the inclusive democratic institutions based on universal suffrage. Somaliland is an active partner in the horn of Africa, actively working with the international community in the fight against extremism and terrorism.
6. Somaliland presents a strong case for recognition under international law; it meets the criteria for statehood, and effective government, a defined territory and with the capacity to enter into relations with other states.
7. Somaliland wants formal recognition for what has already existed since 1991.
8. An independent Somaliland can serve as an example to the region of the establishment of peace and democracy.
9. That recognition would help to entrench democracy in the Horn of Africa.
10. That recognition would also help to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the dumping of toxic waste in the region.
11. That recognition would allow Somaliland to attract international investors and tourists creating jobs for its growing young population and allow it to interact with the international institutions like the World Bank, African Bank, EU and the United Nations.

This Council resolves:

1. To support the campaign to recognise Somaliland as an independent state. Support for this motion will show that this Council has listened to the Somaliland community in Tower Hamlets and that we recognise them as an integral part of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The meeting ended at 10.45 p.m.