

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY 2019****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:

- Councillor Faroque Ahmed
- Councillor Kahar Chowdhury.
- Councillor Rabina Khan
- Councillor James King
- Councillor Puru Miah
-

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Speaker of the Council reported that he had received a tabled list (as set out at the end of this item) of Non Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (Other Interests) in relation to Agenda Item 12.1 regarding the TUC Great Jobs Agenda.

Councillor Denise Jones declared an interest that must be registered (Other Interests) in agenda item 9.4, a Member question regarding funding for a new health app. This was on the basis that she was a Member of the East London NHS Foundation Trust.

The Monitoring Officer advised that on 17th January 2019, the Standards (Advisory) Committee agreed a general dispensation to all Councillors in respect of matters relating to the Council Tax, including the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. As a result, Members did not have to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 10.1 Report from the Executive: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019-2020.

List of 'other interest that must be registered' - Agenda item 12.1 TUC Great Jobs Agenda

Name of Member	Register of Interest
Mayor John Biggs	Member of GMB
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Member of GMB
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Member of GMB
Councillor Sufia Alam	Unite Trade union
Councillor Amina Ali	Unite Union Unite Community
Councillor Shah Ameen	A member of the GMB
Councillor Asma Begum	Member of GMB

Councillor Kevin Brady	Community Union
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Member of GMB union
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Member, Unite
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Unite
Councillor Dipa Das	Unite the Union
Councillor David Edgar	UNITE
Councillor Marc Francis	GMB Union
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Member, Unite
Councillor Danny Hassell	Member, Unison
Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain	UNITE
Councillor Asma Islam	Member of GMB
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Member of Unison
Councillor Denise Jones	Member of Unite (the Union)
Councillor Rabina Khan	Member of GMB
Councillor Tarik Khan	Unite the Union Communications Workers Union
Councillor James King	Unite
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	Unite the union
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Unite
Councillor Ayas Miah	GMB
Councillor Puru Miah	TSSA Union Unite GMB
Councillor Victoria Obaze	GMB Union
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	Unite
Councillor John Pierce	Unite
Councillor Leema Qureshi	Unite
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	GMB
Councillor Candida Ronald	Community Trade Union
Councillor Helal Uddin	GMB
Councillor Abdal Ullah	GMB
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	GMB member of the University and College Union.
Councillor Bex White	Member of Unite Community
Councillor Val Whitehead	Prospect

3. MINUTES

DECISION:

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on 21st November 2018 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 for CCTV – York Square Chasley/Flamborough/Barnes Streets

Petition not presented due to the absence of the petitioner.

DECISION

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community, for a written response within 28 days.

(Action by: Denise Radley, Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community)

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented his report to the Council. Councillor Andrew Wood, Leader of the Conservative Group, then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

7 – Administration Motion regarding Violence Against Women and Girls Services

Councillor Eve McQuillan **moved** and Councillor Asma Begum **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

DECISION:

This Council notes:

Addressing violence against women and girls is a priority for London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Approximately 70% of all known victims of interpersonal violence in Tower Hamlets are female and 1 in 3 women and girls will experience gender based violence in their lifetime with similar levels of domestic abuse in LGBT relationships and in heterosexual relationships, regardless of gender. In the UK, two women are murdered each week by a current or former partner, and 1 in 5 will be raped in her lifetime.

Since 2010, VAWG services have been decimated. Nationally, the majority of women who seek a refuge space are turned away because there is not enough space. Since 2015, this administration has chosen not to cut funding

for VAWG services. The council launched its VAWG charter in November, as part of our manifesto commitments to tackle violence against women and girls.

Tower Hamlets has a multi-agency strategy in place to address violence against women and girls. As a council

- We have maintained all of our specialist refuge provision for women and girls fleeing abuse
- We have piloted and commissioned innovative new programmes, such as Female Genital Mutilation Community Engagement Programme and a Multiple Disadvantages VAWG Project
- We have maintained provision of life saving Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and Serious and Violent Crime Caseworkers.
- We have maintained our resources for our Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop, Sanctuary Scheme and Positive Change Services, including work with children living with domestic abuse
- We have developed the VAWG Champions Programmes and preventative VAWG programmes within schools and with young people across the borough.
- We run campaigns such as 16 Days of Activism, reaching around 1,000 residents each year, Ask for Angela in the night time economy and our Domestic Abuse No Excuse campaign.

Refuges are currently partly funded by housing benefit. This excludes those who are ineligible for housing benefit because they have no recourse to public funds. It also excludes those who are ineligible because they are working; leading to the perverse situation where people needing to access refuge spaces may have to leave their jobs, making themselves more vulnerable, in order to access help, or have to pay extremely high costs themselves. The government has tried ring-fence funding for 'supported housing services'. This funding structure is unsuitable for refuge provision because it incentivises councils to provide generic supportive housing services for older people, people with drug and alcohol dependencies, street homeless people and domestic violence survivors, rather than specialised services.

Refuge spaces are allocated on a multi-local authority basis, meaning that people likely won't be placed in the local authority in which they live. This means that when other councils cut funding for refuge services, women from Tower Hamlets are affected.

The biggest barrier to women leaving abusive situations is housing, with domestic abuse one of the leading causes of homelessness amongst women. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and Women's Aid have created the Make a Stand pledge which includes the following 4 commitments:

1. To put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are experiencing domestic abuse

2. To make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on your website and in other places which are easily accessible to residents and staff
3. To put in place a HR policy and procedure on domestic abuse, or to incorporate this into an existing policy, to support members of staff who are experiencing domestic abuse
4. Appoint a champion in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

Universal credit payments to a single account for a whole household present a risk that perpetrators will gain control over a victim's finances.

This Council believes:

It is alarming that other councils have chosen to cut VAWG provision which has led to a reduction in refuge spaces.

Housing benefit should not be used to fund refuge spaces. Instead there should be ring-fenced funding for domestic violence services so that they are available for anyone who needs them, regardless of immigration status or income.

Whilst LBTH cannot deal with this issue alone, as councillors we are able to play a role by championing VAWG initiatives in our casework and our communities, and as a council we can campaign for better funding.

Universal credit makes those experiencing domestic abuse more vulnerable.

It is wrong that it is often the victim who loses the secure tenancy, rather than the perpetrator.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on all members of the council to become VAWG champions.
2. We will campaign for adequate funding for refuges and call on the council to champion this issue.
3. To call on the mayor and the lead member to advise other boroughs of the dangers of reducing funding for refuge services.
4. To ensure that this borough has adequate refuge spaces that meet the level of need.
5. To campaign to encourage all RSLs in Tower Hamlets to sign up to the Make a Stand pledges, improving their services for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
6. To call on MPs to advocate for increases to funding levels to domestic violence services so that funding at least matches 2010 levels. We call on them to campaign for changes to the funding structure for refuge provision in parliament, so that funding is ring-fenced specifically for refuges. We also call on them to campaign for split payments to reduce the risk of financial abuse.

(**Action by:** Denise Radley, Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community)

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

8 – Opposition Motion by the Conservative Group regarding Democracy and Civic Participation Commission

Councillor Andrew Wood **moved** and Councillor Peter Golds **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

9. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

9.1 Question from Councillor John Pierce regarding the Overview and Scrutiny review of the budget proposals.

9.2 Question from Councillor Peter Golds seeking to understand the Mayor's views on the Illegal demolition of cottages (on Eastferry road).

9.3 Question from Councillor Dipa Das seeking an update on the Brexit Commission.

9.4 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood regarding funding for a new health app.

9.5 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze regarding support for rough sleepers in cold weather.(No supplementary question was asked)

9.7 Question from Councillor Bex White regarding progress with addressing dangerous driving and air quality issues. (No supplementary question was asked)

9.8 Question from Councillor Marc Francis requesting an update on the refurbishment of the Victoria Park One O'clock Club.

9.9 Question from Councillor Sufia Alam requesting an update on work to facilitate the recruitment and retention of social workers.

9.10 Question from Councillor Kyrsten Perry requesting an update on the Breathe Clean awareness campaign.

9.11 Question from Councillor Asma Islam regarding the findings of the latest Ofsted monitoring visit of Children's Social Care.

9.12 Question from Councillor Val Whitehead seeking information on the recent Early Years Summit in terms of the issues raised and next steps.

9.13 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar requesting an update on the £1.5m investment in the borough's leisure centres. (No supplementary question was asked)

Question 9.6 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. A Written response would be provided to the question. (Note the written response will follow)

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

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

10.1 Report from the Executive: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019-2020

The Council considered a report on proposed changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, forwarded for consideration of Council by the Mayor in Cabinet on Wednesday 9 January 2019.

DECISION:

That the Council agree:

1. To limit the maximum disabled non dependant deduction to £4 per week.
2. To adjust the minimum level of income for self-employed under 25's to reflect age rules.
3. To enhance the support available to increase earnings and income for self-employed claimants.
4. To increase backdating provision for the scheme from 4 weeks to 52 weeks.
5. To note the equalities impact assessment arising from the recommended changes to the scheme as set out in section 4 of this report.

(Action by: Neville Murton, Acting Corporate Director Resources).

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Appointment of Chair of Pensions Committee

The Council considered the report regarding the appointment of a Chair of the Pensions Committee.

Following the receipt of two nominations for the position, the nominations were put to the vote and Councillor Mufeedah Bustin was elected to the position of Chair of the Pensions Committee.

DECISION:

1. That Councillor Mufeedah Bustin be appointed Chair of the Pensions Committee for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year.

(Action by: Asmat Hussain Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 Motion regarding the TUC Great Jobs Agenda

Mayor John Biggs **moved** and Councillor Motin Uz – Zaman **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

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

DECISION:

This Council believes that everyone at work deserves a great job, where workers in our borough are paid and treated fairly and with respect; work in a safe and healthy workplace; have regular hours; have the chance to be represented by unions and be consulted on what matters at work; and get the chance to learn and progress at work and get on in life.

This Council resolves to:

1. Support the TUC's Great Jobs Agenda, which sets out the actions employers and the government must take for every job to be a great job.
2. Ensure as an employer we continue providing great jobs for our own employees.
3. Continue to value meaningful workforce engagement and representation through our recognised trade unions.
4. Continue our work with employers in the borough to influence their employment practices, and to ensure that business growth is

sustainable and ethical.

5. Make increasing job quality a key part of the conversation when pursuing local economic development opportunities in the city.
6. Use our commissioning and procurement processes where possible to raise employment standards amongst those suppliers and providers we work with.
7. Where appropriate, engage with government and other bodies who hold regulatory powers, to tackle issues which local authorities do not have statutory powers to address directly.
8. Write to our MPs informing them of our position and encouraging them to support the Great Jobs Agenda too.

(Action by: Neville Murton, Acting Corporate Director Resources).

The meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.