


Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Council</b>  21 March 2018	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Petitions to Council</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services.
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## SUMMARY

1. This report sets out the valid petitions submitted for presentation at the Council meeting on Wednesday 21 March 2018. The texts of all petitions received for presentation to this meeting are set out in the attached report.
2. The Council's Constitution provides for up to four petitions to be heard at each ordinary Council meeting. These are taken in order of receipt, except that petitions for debate (those in excess of 2,000 signatures) will take precedence. Should more than four petitions be received, all remaining petitions will be listed to be formally noted by Council.
3. For Petitions listed as for debate:
  - a. petitioners may address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
  - b. Members may then question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
  - c. The petition will then be debated by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. All speeches are limited to a maximum of 3 minutes. During his or her speech, any Councillor may move a motion for the Council's consideration relevant to matters in the petition (this does not require the suspension of the Council Procedure Rules).
  - d. the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the petition for up to 3 minutes.
  - e. Following the petition debate, any motions moved will be put to the vote in the order they were tabled.
  - f. If no motion is agreed, the petition will stand referred to the relevant Corporate Director for a written response within 28 days of the meeting.

4. For Petitions listed as to be heard:
  - a. petitioners may address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
  - b. Members may then question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
  - c. Finally, the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the petition for up to 2 minutes. The petition will then be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will provide a written response within 28 days of the date of the meeting.
5. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.
6. For Petitions listed as to be noted, petitioners may not address the meeting. The Speaker will state where they will go for a full response.
7. Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.

## **PETITIONS FOR DEBATE**

No petitions for debate had been received by the petitions deadline.

## **PETITIONS TO BE HEARD**

### **5.1 Petition regarding Wapping Speed Cameras (Petition from Stephen O'Shea and others)**

Car racing has increased drastically in Wapping over the recent years, but the Police and Tower Hamlets Council appear powerless to fight it. We call for the Council and Police to install speed cameras in Wapping immediately, to safeguard the lives of local residents.

### **5.2 Petition regarding Watts Grove Parking Permits (Petition from Kabir Hussain and others)**

We the residents of Watts Grove are having to deal with bureaucracy and red tape in relation to their parking issues. Some of the residents who moved here had a parking permit before, but it was 10-month old when they moved here but the Council is telling them that it must be minimum 1 year old to transfer here. Most of the families depend on car for their daily life to fulfil responsibilities for their children, elderly, carers or loved ones as there are disabled children and parents. In another instance, there is an example when the Council has summarily refused to transfer permit because the family/person has just gone beyond the strict stipulated time-limit to transfer amidst all the chaos and stress of moving. Instead the Council should be compassionate in making the slight adjustments and support to the local families with these issues. We ask the Council to ensure that all residents have at least one parking space within the vicinity and ensure parking transfer is not made unduly complicated, bureaucratic and a punishment for residents.

### **5.3 Petition regarding Community safety in Dunmore Point and surrounding areas (Petition from Fazleh Elaahi and others)**

Community safety petition - drug-dealing, drug use, squatters, anti-social behaviour in Dunmore Point, Kirton Gardens, Wingfield House, Virginia Road and the surrounding area.

We, the undersigned, residents and stakeholders of Dunmore Point and the surrounding area, have seen an increase in drug-dealing, drug use, squatting and anti-social behaviour in our area. These activities are negatively impacting upon our quality of life, reputation of our neighbourhood and the most vulnerable people amongst us particularly our children and young people. We call upon Tower Hamlets Council and the Mayor to immediately address this important and harmful issue upsetting local residents. There are clear safeguarding concerns due to the medical risks associated with the availability of loose needle left by drug users in areas such as the stairwell of Dunmore Point where children frequently walk through.

### **5.4 Petition regarding Drug-dealing and Anti-Social Behaviour in Gower Walk and the Surrounding Area (Petition from Syed Shofor Ali and others)**

We, the undersigned, residents and stakeholders of Gower Walk and the surrounding area have seen an increase in drug-dealing and anti-social behaviour in our area. Many of these incidents and crimes usually go unreported because of a variety of reasons but nevertheless significantly affect the local community — especially our children and young people. These activities are also negatively impacting upon our quality of life, reputation of our neighbourhood and the most vulnerable people among us. We call upon Tower Hamlets Council and the Mayor to immediately address this important and detrimental issue distressing the local residents.

## **PETITIONS TO BE NOTED**

### **5.5 Petition regarding Crime and other issues in Whitechapel Ward (Petition from Syeda Nasim and others)**

Shocking increase in Crime, prostitution on our streets, second hand and open drug dealings, begging and vagrancy on tube station, rubbish on Our Streets, Unauthorised car parking and increased Council Tax for residents in the Whitechapel Ward. Tower Hamlets.

We, the residents Of Whitechapel ward, are seriously worried about the above issues highlighted in the heading of this community petition. Tower Hamlets Council removed many Tower Hamlets Partnership Police officers, drastically reducing them to only 6 officers in 2016. Since 2015/16 residents of Tower Hamlets, including Whitechapel ward, have witnessed the Borough being declared and/or suffering from:

- One of the worst places in the country for drugs and drug-related crimes and deaths. (Mirror)
- The second worst London borough for the under-24 victims of knife crime and Stabbings. (Evening Standard). One of the worst authorities in the UK for knife and gun crime.
- The official crime figures indicate that crime in Tower Hamlets including homicides/murders, racist hate crimes, sexual offences and other types have seen a shocking increase since 2015. (The Met and media)
- Our Council Tax has seen one of the highest increases – 9% increase for residents since 2016.
- £Millions of cuts in Adults Social Care, Children and Youth Services and cuts in key community services.
- A shocking increase (12%) in the Mayor's own personal salary worth extra E 10,000 in his pay packet.

The residents are very anxious about the safety, welfare, brutal cuts and illogical decisions affecting children. young people, elderly, women and vulnerable — along with -- the reputation of the area where they live and local families walk to and from their homes with their children or family. We ask Mayor John Biggs, along with his administration, to take 4 practical steps, which he has personal control over:

1. Install and update CCTVs to improve prosecution and prevent the dangerous incidents occurring.
2. Increase the Community Safety Team, its budget and Council THEOs in the area, with the police.
3. Increased budget and monitoring of Veolia contract and the missed rubbish collection and cleaning.
4. We ask for immediate action from the Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Cabinet

Members responsible to address the serious issues highlighted, reverse their decision of cuts like the Council Tax increase of 9% and to the residents' services using the CIL money, developments funds, increased business rates and reserves of £409m inherited from the previous administration.

## **5.6 Petition regarding Watts Grove Parking Restrictions (Petition from Bodrul Islam Choudhury and others)**

Urgent Petition: Mayor John Biggs and his Labour-run Council, are Deliberately Making Parking Difficult for Residents of Watts Grove, Yeo St, Glaucus St, Violet Rd and Morris Road. Stop unfair decision and gentrification in Tower Hamlets.

It has not been long since many residents of the Borough were initially sent a sudden parking consultation document by Tower Hamlets Council - run by Labour Mayor John Biggs and his councillors - to change the parking restrictions without initially giving residents the option to keep the 'current' parking restrictions. They wanted to impose a more prohibitive regime. It was only rectified when 5,342 Tower Hamlets residents came together and signed Cllr Ohid Ahmed's parking petition protesting about the way it was handled and rejected the approach. The Council seemed to have got the message and the proposal was dropped for BI zone quietly and then changes in zones B2 & B4 were also rejected.

But now again, we, the residents of above-named streets are shocked to learn that John Biggs's run Labour council have suddenly put notices 'on lampposts' instead of writing to residents to change the parking in our area. The Council under the current Mayor and his Labour councillors are deliberately making it 'almost impossible' for locals with families, friends and loved ones to park near their homes. We believe it is a ploy to force many residents out of these streets and impose more gentrification in Tower Hamlets. It is inexcusable and must be stopped. The Council notices on lampposts are no substitute for genuine and transparent consultation with residents. These notices, a bit like in ancient Rome, which more often than not hardly anyone stops to read, falsely claim that it is an "upgrade", in fact, it is a straight-forward 'prohibition', meaning residents and families won't be able to park anywhere near their homes.

1. We ask Labour Mayor John Biggs and his councillors to reverse this illogical decision immediately - and stop this from happening again - so residents are not penalised further as the current parking is already very prohibitive.
2. We ask the Council to stop this proposal as the process is flawed, improper and unfair.
3. Stop gentrification of our streets and force families out of their neighbourhoods in Tower Hamlets.
4. Stop treating residents with contempt and disrespect hoping that they won't notice such parking changes.

### **5.7 Petition regarding Burnham Estate Lift (Petition from Farhana Akther and others)**

We the undersigned residents living at the above building are requesting for a lift to be installed - a portable one - just for elderly people, those with disability and those with shopping or young children and pushchairs.

Many of us have lived here long — quite a few all our lives - and now the health and ability are not as good as before and are struggling every day with shopping, old age, young children and to carry out day to day essential life activities. It won't be feasible for the council to rehouse all those affected residents and we believe the best option would be to consider putting a lift urgently. We would be grateful if Tower Hamlets Council will take an urgent action to help local residents and install a lift at this estate.

### **5.8 Petition regarding Tower Hamlets Council Budget and Community Services (Petition from Ms Momina Begum and others)**

We ask Mayor John Biggs to reverse his budget cuts – based on his mayoral choices and decisions – which have a clear negative impact on the community services and residents.

This is important because:

Despite inheriting £409 million reserves in 2015 from the previous administration which were put aside to help Tower Hamlets residents and to protect local services, as well as, millions in the capital funds and receiving hundreds of extra millions of pounds, Mayor John Biggs, since June 2015, has chosen to:

- Increase Council Tax for residents by 9% since 2016. Between 2011-15, it was frozen at 0%;
- Make brutal cuts of c. £75m in total (c. £17m in 2016, then extra £58m in Feb 2017);
- Make cuts of £7.5 million to Adults Services; and £7.2 million to Children's Services;
- Shut down our Youth Centres, and stop funding Drugs/Rehab project like Nafas;
- Shut down Queen Mary nursery and privatised other services;
- Reduce the Council Tax subsidy for the self-employed and others;
- Stop Free Homecare by introducing new charges for residents, especially the elderly;
- Other frontline and community services reduced or removed;
- Cut 34 police officers, despite warnings, refused to fund them in 2015/16 but suddenly found the money, conveniently, before the election to fund some;
- Crime and drugs use increased, with other negative consequences, as a direct result of these budget choices by Mayor John Biggs which can't be simply excused or blamed on anyone else. These are only a few examples. Mayor John Biggs has made the above choices, decisions and cuts for residents while he has found money to:
- Award himself a shocking 11.78% pay increase & give inflation-busting raise to others.
- Spend £50m on consultants, agency contractors, gadgets and ICT

upgrades.

- Pay £5m on the Council's top-tiered salaries while hundreds of lower and middle-paid employees, who deliver services, have been made redundant.

### **5.9 Petition regarding Wapping Social Club (Petition from Sheila Smith and others)**

We the undersigned patrons and supporters of the Wapping Social Club are petitioning the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to reconsider their decision to close our club.

Wapping Social Club has received notification that the club must close in September. We are asking all of our customers to sign our petition so that we can show the London Borough of Tower Hamlets how important our club is to the local community.

### **5.10 Petition regarding the Save Jamboree Campaign (Petition from Rena and others)**

The Save Jamboree campaign now has a chance to ask the council to step in to help prevent the music venue Jamboree from closing. To do this, we must collect 2,000 signatures from people who live or work in Tower Hamlets, requesting specifically that Tower Hamlets council take action.

We don't have much time though, we must present the signatures by this Wednesday, March 7th. If we can do it, the council will have to debate the closure in a council meeting on March 21st, and we have a chance of having the mayor step in to help us.

If you live or work in Tower Hamlets, please would you sign this petition:

- Calling on the mayor of Tower Hamlets to intervene in this case and ask Sudbury Properties to revoke their decision not to renew Jamboree's lease.
- Calling on Tower Hamlets council to review our application for Cable Street Studios, the building where Jamboree is located, to be awarded the status of an asset of community value, which was declined without due process being followed and without steps for appeal being provided.
- Calling on Tower Hamlets council to recognise that if Tower Hamlets wishes to become the London Borough of Culture, it must take actions to support the venues that are providing the lifeblood of cultural life in the borough.
- Calling on the mayor of Tower Hamlets to ensure that any future development plans will include Cable Street Studios' cultural value and protect its community.

The previous petition - which was signed by not just local people but others from across London and even abroad - will remain up online, and will add to our campaign. However, the next step is to show the council we have overwhelming support in the local community too.



Jamboree is a much-loved grassroots music venue which is being forced to close at the end of March after the landlord refused to renew its lease, giving no explanation. We are aware of plans by Sudbury Properties for the building to be redeveloped, however, no official information has been shared with the tenants, and the online page for the development plan was taken down last week.

In the heart of the East End, Jamboree has provided a stage for musicians from around the world for almost a decade and is a hub for the local community. The number of live music venues in London is dwindling with 40% of grassroots venues lost since 2008, and the Mayor of London supports Jamboree's effort to stay open.