


Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 21 November 2018	
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group	

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

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one Motion submitted by an Opposition Group. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, submission of the Opposition Motion for Debate will alternate in sequence between the opposition groups. This Opposition Motion is submitted by the Conservative Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

8 – Opposition Motion by the Conservative Group - regarding Affordable Housing in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood

Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds

The Council notes:

The results of the 2018 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey show that the second highest concern for residents was a lack of affordable housing with 37% concerned.

This council further notes:

That the Chancellor Philip Hammond has announced that the Housing Revenue Account cap that controls local authority borrowing for house building will be abolished from 29 October 2018 in England

In response to the scrapping of the cap, Polly Neate, chief executive of homelessness charity Shelter, said: "Scrapping the borrowing cap lays down the gauntlet to local authorities to bring forward home-building plans – no more excuses."

That the Mayor of London on the 23rd October 2018 released £1,029 million of government grants to build new affordable housing in London. Tower Hamlets only received £13 million from the Mayor of London, the fifth lowest number across London Boroughs.

By contrast our five neighbours will each receive:

Newham £107 million

Southwark £89 million

Hackney £45.6 million

Lewisham £37.7 million

Greenwich £32.6 million

This is despite Tower Hamlets currently having the highest housing targets in London (2nd highest targets in London when new London Plan approved)

The government funding is part of the provision of over £44 billion of new financial support for housing between 2017-18 and 2022-23.

This council further notes:

The Council has committed to building 2,000 new Council homes but a Council response to an Overview & Scrutiny question defined new council homes as including:

- Purchase of s106 properties
- Buy backs of former council homes
- Delivery of modular homes
- Conversion of community buildings for temporary accommodation

Also, that many residents believe that affordable housing is unaffordable. It is extremely difficult to actually find information on the Councils website to get a full understanding of the different rent levels and service charges so that they have a proper understanding of the actual costs of new affordable housing.

This Council believes:

That the lifting of the HRA cap provides an opportunity to review our affordable housing targets and to build more new homes

That buying s106 properties already with planning permission or already built former Council homes is not delivering new Council homes (it just changes the ownership of homes being occupied by residents of Tower Hamlets)

That by competing with housing associations to purchase s106 properties mean less money being spent on new affordable homes within Tower Hamlets as housing associations will instead purchase new homes elsewhere

That only the delivery of new homes which would not otherwise be built and at affordable prices will deliver what residents need

This Council therefore recommends the following:

1. To increase the current housing targets in the light of the additional funding now available
2. To change the definition of new Council homes to mean new property that would otherwise not be built but still:
 - a. Including modular homes like Place Ladywell as a way of speeding up delivery
 - b. Including converting community buildings which does deliver genuinely new homes. That the definition of new Council homes does not include buying existing homes or those already with planning permission as that does not increase the total stock of homes in Tower Hamlets
3. That in the next round of allocations by the Mayor of London that Tower Hamlets bids for more government grant better reflecting its status as the number one deliverer of new homes in London.
4. That the Council submit to the government a bid for a large slice of the funds available in the Housing Infrastructure Fund
5. To provide residents a better understanding of how affordable housing works and what it actually costs