

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2010**

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD,  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**SUMMARY**

1. Set out overleaf are the questions submitted by Members of the Council for response by Members of the Executive at the Council meeting on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010.
2. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted.
3. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. There is a time limit of thirty minutes for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any question not answered within this time will be dealt with by way of a written response. The Mayor will decide the time allocated to each question.
5. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

26 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

**7.1 Question from Councillor Muhammad Abdullah Salique to the Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families, Councillor Abdul Asad**

Can the Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families outline how educational achievement has improved in the last 4 years under this Labour administration for Key stage 1,2,3, GCSE and A-Levels, where there has been investment in the bricks and mortar of the borough's schools and where this money has come from?

**7.2 Question from Councillor Tim Archer to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

"£300,000 of S106 money received in April 2007 from the redevelopment of the former Jaguar showroom on Limeharbour is being spent on street lighting. How was this decision made?"

**7.3 Question from Councillor Alibor Choudhury to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

Could the Leader of the Council tell us what has been achieved towards each of the Council's 6 political priorities in the last two years, giving a detailed breakdown by LAP of investment and delivery?

**7.4 Question from Councillor Abjol Miah to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

Is the Lead Member aware that the Crown Estate is proposing to sell off homes in the borough without balloting residents who are very strongly opposed to this sell off and will the Lead Member agree with me that this sell off should be opposed as it threatens the rights of many tenants, to undermine the communities that have been built up on these estates over many years and, above all, the provision of vital homes for key workers in the emergency and other essential services?

**7.5 Question from Councillor Ann Jackson to the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Rofique Ahmed**

Can the Lead Member tell us what has been done over the last 4 years to protect and enhance the borough's heritage, concentrating on our historic buildings, parks and the celebration of our rich and diverse cultural history?

**7.6 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

What is the Lead Member's response to the recent report of the Crown Prosecution Service inspectorate that found the overall performance of the CPS in Tower Hamlets to be poor, with outcomes for cases of sexual crimes described as poor and service to victims and witnesses rated as poor? How can the Borough work with the CPS to improve the criminal prosecution service for victims of crime?

**7.7 Question from Councillor Bill Turner to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Rania Khan**

Can the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships tell us how many people took part in this year's participatory budgeting event and give us a breakdown of the services they chose from LAP menus?

**7.8 Question from Councillor David Snowdon to the Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

Does the Council's budget have a financial black hole for the years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14?

**7.9 Question from Councillor Waiseul Islam to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

What has the current Labour administration achieved for residents of Blackwall and Cubitt Town since 2006?

**7.10 Question from Councillor Fazlul Haque to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Has the Lead Member been to the area around Columbia Road flower market in my ward on a Sunday to see the tow away vehicles circling like vultures ever ready to swoop on the cars of the unwary car owner to the Flower Market, that this is typical of the approach now being taken to parking enforcement in this borough, that this approach severely and unfairly penalises car owners whether they are resident or not in the borough and that it also discourages visitors to Tower Hamlets historic markets and thereby adversely affects local businesses and the local economy and will the Lead Member agree with me that towing away in this borough should be suspended pending a thorough-going review of parking enforcement to make it a fairer and more just and return it to common sense?

**7.11 Question from Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Could the Lead Member advise how many kilometres of mandatory cycle lanes are in Tower Hamlets, and whether these are considered sufficient to keep cyclists safe from accidents and to promote cycling over car use in the Borough?

**7.12 Question from Councillor Rupert Eckhardt to the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Rofique Ahmed**

Aside from the Henry Moore statue belonging to Tower Hamlets hidden in a field in Wakefield, and only recently uncovered by Councillors Archer and Snowdon, has the Council maintained a register of artwork worth more than £1,000 that it owns? In addition how many other assets owned by Tower Hamlets Council are located outside of the Borough?

**7.13 Question from Councillor Dulal Uddin to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

Will the Lead Member join with me in condemning the Dispatches programme which sought, entirely unfairly, to denigrate this council, senior officers in this council who are unable to reply to that denigration, and other respected residents of Tower Hamlets and would the Lead Member join with me in condemning those who co-operated in this witch-hunting programme and helped to inspire it, including the MP for Poplar and Canning Town and the Leader of the Conservative group on the Council and would he confirm the confidence the Council has both in its procedures for allocating money and in its senior officers and would the Lead Member also join me in condemning the anti-Muslim comments that have been made by the chair of the Labour Party in the aftermath of the Dispatches programme?

**7.14 Question from Councillor Tim O'Flaherty to the Lead Member for Employment and Skills, Councillor Oliur Rahman**

Could the Lead Member advise me of the current targets for National Indicator 151 '*Employment Rate*' and National Indicator 152 '*Working age people on out of work benefits*' and advise whether the Borough is liaising with the Government Office for London to negotiate a reduction in this target, and if so, what the new targets for '*Employment rate*' and '*Working age people on out of work benefits*' will be?

**7.15 Question from Councillor Dr. Emma Jones to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Given the recent report to the environment audit committee concerning the number of deaths cause by exposure to air pollution, what initiatives will Tower Hamlets Council be undertaking to reduce air pollution caused by traffic?

**7.16 Question from Councillor Salim Ullah to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Is the Lead Member aware of the severe restrictions in this borough on those who have blue badge disabled parking permits and that these restrictions lead to the absurdities such as disabled car owners having to park on yellow lines across from a shop, for example, that they wish to use rather than immediately outside it in a residents or business permit bay, that sometimes they have to park far away in a pay bay, and does the Lead Member agree that there needs to be an urgent review with a view to trying to relax the restrictions on disabled parking?

**7.17 Question from Councillor Abdul Matin to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

Could the Lead Member advise me of the current target for National Indicator 155 *Affordable Homes Delivered* and advise whether the Borough is liaising with the Government Office for London (GOL) to negotiate a reduction in this target, and if so, what the new target for delivery of affordable homes in 2009/2010 will be?

**7.18 Question from Councillor Ahmed Hussain to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Will the Lead Member outline what road safety proposals are to be put in place in St Paul's Way?

**7.19 Question from Councillor Mamun Rashid to the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Rofique Ahmed**

Would the Lead Member join with me in congratulating the Bethnal Green Stairways to Heaven campaign for having raised so much money to establish a fitting memorial to those who died so tragically in the Bethnal Green tube disaster in 1943 and would the Lead Member agree that the council should increase its promotion of the appeal for this memorial and also explore the possibility of increasing its own financial support for the memorial so that the project can be completed as soon as possible and within the lifetimes of the remaining survivors and their families?

**7.20 Question from Councillor Shirley Houghton to the Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis**

Will the Lead Member set out all of the land parcels that have been transferred from Tower Hamlets Council to Registered Social Landlords in the last four years, detailing each site location, size and the receiving RSL, plus the amount of money received by LBTH in each case, and a comparable open-market sale valuation for each site? Will he also set out the steps that will be taken in future years to ensure council assets are not under-sold and that local taxpayers receive full value?

**7.21 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman**

Will the Lead Member investigate the issue of patients' rights in relation to GP practices and in particular the lack of rights patients have if GP practices decide to remove patients from their lists and will the lead member acknowledge that I raised this with the previous Lead Member for health and received entirely unsatisfactory responses on the matter?

**7.22 Question from Councillor Philip Briscoe to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Rania Khan**

In view of the urgent need to proceed with the redevelopment of Blackwall Reach, what additional sources has the Council identified for funding purposes?

**7.23 Question from Councillor Harun Miah to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joshua Peck**

Is the Lead Member aware that a tender was put out for a four year contract to distribute East End Life, that three out of the four parties represented in this council are committed either to closing East End Life or radically reducing its frequency, that there is the ruling group which supports the weekly East End Life is very likely to lose its majority in the forthcoming local elections and would the Lead Member therefore agree that the tender for the distribution of the East End Life should be put on hold until after the results of the local elections in May are known?

**7.24 Question from Councillor Dr. Anwara Ali to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Will the Lead Member outline the administration's proposed future strategy for the enhancement of Roman Road Market?

**7.25 Question from Councillor Abdul Munim to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Is the Lead Member aware that the painting of specific bays for resident and business permit holders to park in was supposed to be a trial pending consultation of resident and business permit holders and that the painting of bays has now been extended across the borough with little or no consultation and that many permit holders are concerned that the effect of painting bays has been to reduce rather than increase the availability of car parking space and are particularly upset that they may now receive a penalty charge notice for parking across the lines dividing bays even those this may enable more cars to park in a parking area and could the Lead Member explain why there was inadequate consultation?

**7.26 Question from Councillor Peter Golds to the Lead Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Rofique Ahmed**

The decision to at last proceed with the redevelopment of Poplar Baths is based on the premise that sums will be available from Section 106 agreements. What if any contingencies have been made for the redevelopment if this source is not forthcoming or delayed?