

Agenda item 4: BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2011/12

Amendment proposed by: Councillor Helal Abbas

Seconded by: Councillor David Edgar

This Council notes:

1. The scale of the cuts imposed on public services, families and individuals by the Conservative-led government and their Liberal Democrat partners.
2. That Tower Hamlets Council is facing cuts of £72million over the next three years.
3. The decision of the Cabinet under the previous Labour administration that the priority in responding to the government's cuts be protecting the delivery of frontline services by reducing layers of management, cutting agency staff, tougher deals with suppliers, using fewer buildings, and other measures.
4. Assurances that after school childcare provision (formerly part of the Junior Youth Service) can be maintained in nine schools, open to working and non-working parents with no increase in charges and with no reduction in the number of places, can be provided at a total cost to the Council of £180,000.

This Council believes:

3. The government is cutting too fast and too deeply with damaging consequences for the people of Tower Hamlets.

This Council welcomes:

1. The inclusion in the Mayor's revised budget motion of those Labour Group amendments which he accepted at the budget meeting on 23 February.
2. The additional 21 police officers proposed to be funded by the Community Safety Fund allocated to the borough by the Greater London Authority, drugs action funding and Metropolitan Police Authority funding allocated by the Borough Police Commander, but notes that these additional police should be seen in the context of:
 - The Joint Enforcement Teams comprising 20 police officers that the Council paid for in 2009/10 and 2010/11 coming to an end on 31 March 2011
 - The comment in the letter from the London Deputy Mayor for Policing that "... the Home Office has identified that the Community Safety Funding will reduce further for 2012/13 meaning a 60% reduction in total on the 2010/11 baseline"
 - Reports that there may be a reduction in the number of Police Sergeants in Safer Neighbourhood Teams across London including Tower Hamlets
 - Reports that there has been a fall in the number of police officers in post over the last two years.

This Council resolves to amend the Independent Mayor's revised budget motion as follows:

1. To include funding of £180,000 for after school childcare provision in the budget on an ongoing basis, rather than as seed funding in 2011/12 only.

2. East End Life - in line with the Government's Local Authority Publicity Code to reduce publication to quarterly with a saving of £200,000.
3. Community Safety - add 17 police officers - one per ward - to the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, meeting with local residents at Ward Panels, to replace the current team of Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers with effect from 1 July at net saving in 2011/12 of £25,000 and a net saving in 2012/13 of £180,000. The Mayor to investigate whether the cost of paying for the additional police officers can be reduced by making use of the "buy one, get one free" offer from the Metropolitan Police Authority.
- 4 Invest £25,000 in children's play projects.
5. Confirm a Council Tax for Tower Hamlets of £885.52 at Band D for 2011/12, which is no increase on 2010/11.

This Council further resolves:

1. That the use of funding for the employment initiatives proposal accepted by the Mayor should be the subject of detailed plans in respect of outputs and providers as a part of his Employment Strategy. The Strategy should be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review and to the Full Council for agreement.
2. That the buy-back element of affordable housing proposal accepted by the Mayor should be subject to an appraisal of whether buy-backs represent the best value for money as a way of increasing the supply of family-sized or other affordable housing, and if they do not represent best value, make use of other options for increasing affordable housing.
3. To carry out reviews of the impact of the following savings proposals on service users (involving their families, advocates and friends where appropriate) and report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and full Council by the end of October 2011 in time for the results of the reviews to influence the budget setting process for 2012/13:
 - Promoting independence and reducing demand for domiciliary care through reablement
 - Better use of supported housing
 - Modernising learning disability day services
 - Redesign and integration of early years and children's centres management.
4. To ensure that the equalities impact assessments for the impact of the budget savings are kept under review and updated and that the proposed Fairness Commission includes cross party representatives and reports in time for its conclusions to influence the budget setting process for 2012/13.