


Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>COUNCIL</b>  18 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Motions submitted by Members of the Council</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## SUMMARY

1. The following motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the motions alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

## MOTIONS

Set out overleaf is the motions that have been submitted.

## 12.1 Motion on RSL Service Standards

**Proposer:** Cllr Kabir Ahmed

**Seconder:** Cllr Maium Miah

### **This Council notes:**

- The inadequate conditions that residents in the Milo and Diagoras House estate in Bow have been living in since September 2022, with issues exacerbated by the cold weather.
- That many residents in the estate were without hot water and heating for 91 days – three months – as of the 22<sup>nd</sup> December, and that several properties remain unheated and without hot water.
- That this has caused an increase in damp and mould in properties, which can be particularly dangerous for children and the elderly.
- That internal works to rectify these issues did not begin until the 31<sup>st</sup> October – over a month after the initial failings had been reported.
- That there have been reports of serious respiratory, skin and other internal illnesses as a result of these failings, with many of those worst affected being children.
- That residents were not sufficiently informed of the progress of the works, with shifting deadlines, physical disruption and the aforementioned threat of illness creating an intolerable atmosphere of distress and uncertainty for those affected.
- That many residents feel let down and betrayed by the level of care and support that has been offered to them by Swan Housing – who are the Registered Social Landlords (RSL) for the properties – with many suffering mental health and financial issues due to the turmoil created by their indecision.
- That the purpose of a Registered Social Landlord, as defined by the National Government's own criterion, is: "to carry on for the benefit of the community the business of providing housing and any associated amenities for persons in necessitous circumstances upon terms appropriate to their means"<sup>1</sup>
- That Mayor Lutfur Rahman directly addressed the landlords in his transformative *Manifesto*, which stipulated the following: "There is a social housing crisis in Tower Hamlets. Having a roof over your head is a basic human right, but at the moment we cannot house the people who want to live here and too many live in housing that doesn't meet their needs or struggle with unresponsive landlords."<sup>2</sup>
- That this document further highlighted the role that social landlords should play in 'improving the condition of the homes they let and the service they provide to their tenants', and that they should work with the Council, 'collectively and individually, to improve housing services, stock condition and governance'.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance for charitable registered social landlords, [Guidance for charitable registered social landlords \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk), p.2 (*Objects of Charitable RSLs*)

<sup>2</sup> *Aspire Manifesto*, p.10

- **This Council believes:**

- That Swan Housing is providing an inadequate service to residents. It failed to provide stable and adequate temporary accommodation to countless residents, while at the same time failing to provide the associated amenities for residents in necessitous circumstances.
- That Swan Housing controls a large amount of properties formerly owned by the Local Authority that have since been transferred under Housing Choice, with the provision that they would improve and maintain the stock sufficiently.
- The aforementioned failures to rectify the issues faced by residents in Milo and Diagoras house exposes Swan Housing's inability to adequately provide and maintain good standards.
- That the residents of Tower Hamlets should not be subjected to poor housing conditions and should expect warm, decent, comfortable homes, where any issues that arise are resolved swiftly and with minimal delays.
- That Swan Housing's right to provide homes to residents of this Borough should be reviewed and scrutinised accordingly, following such inadequate performance.

**This Council resolves:**

- To review the contractual situation and agreement/ relationship between Swan Housing and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets as a Local Authority.
- To adopt the forthcoming *Mayor's Decent Homes Charter* as a prerequisite for all RSLs to adhere to if they are to continue as housing providers and partners with Tower Hamlets Council.
- To invite residents to meet with the Mayor to outline their views and frustrations at their mistreatment by Swan Housing.
- To call on Officers to review the process of scrutiny relating to RSLs in the Borough, to ensure that it is as rigorous as possible, and holds those RSLs failing to deliver the levels of excellence expected of them by this Council to account.
- That a paper should be prepared for a spotlight session on the failings of Swan Housing with a view to extend the scope of this scrutiny session to other RSLs if required.
- That the findings and recommendations of this scrutiny session are to be brought to the earliest possible meeting of Cabinet for the Executive's consideration.

## **12.2 Motion regarding Access to GPs**

**Proposer:** Cllr Amy Lee

**Seconder:** Cllr Ayas Miah

### **This Council notes that:**

- Primary care is in crisis, with people across Tower Hamlets and the rest of the UK struggling to access GP services and dental treatment.
- The current pressures on hospitals, along with rising ambulance waiting times, is having a huge knock-on effect on our already pressed GP services across the borough.
- New figures from NHS England show that 18% of people in the NHS North East London Integrated Care Board, covering Tower Hamlets, could not get an appointment to see or speak to a GP or nurse the last time they tried.
- The Government has failed to remain on track to deliver 6000 additional GPs by 2024-25.
- Our doctors and nurses across the NHS in Tower Hamlets work hard for residents while grappling with the biggest staffing crisis in its history in the face of Government inaction.

### **This Council believes:**

- That everyone should be able to get an appointment to see a doctor when they need to and has the right to receive dental treatment when they need it.

### **This Council, therefore, resolves to:**

- Forward a copy of this motion to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and call on him to urgently bring forward a plan to fix the crisis in primary care, to meet the Government's GP target and ensure everyone who needs an NHS dentist can access one.
- Request the local Members of Parliament support this motion and continue to raise this important issue in Parliament.
- Call on the Executive Mayor and the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing to proactively work with the local NHS trust to ensure Tower Hamlets residents have full access to their GP and dentists.

## **12.3 Motion on Local Electricity Bill**

**Proposer:** Councillor Rachel Blake

**Secunder:** Councillor Sirajul Islam

### **This Council notes:**

1. The efforts that this council has made under the previous administration to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy, including:
  - I. Declaring a climate emergency in March 2019;
  - II. Launched the Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Partnership Action Plan in November 2021 to become a net zero carbon council by 2025 and a net zero carbon borough by 2045 or sooner;
  - III. Planted hundreds of street trees;
  - IV. Approved 400 new electric vehicle charging points across the borough;
  - V. In 2021, Tower Hamlets Council was named the greenest local authority in the country.
2. That very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so.
3. That making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would enable and empower new local businesses, or councils, to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local customers.
4. That revenues received by new local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions.

### **This Council resolves to:**

1. To support the Local Electricity Bill, supported by 306 MPs which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply companies and co-operatives by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply operation.
2. Inform the local media of this decision.
3. Instruct the Mayor to write to the borough's Members of Parliament local MPs, asking them to support the Bill.
4. Instruct the Mayor to write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, expressing its support.

## **12.4 Motion on Greenwich Foot Tunnel**

**Proposer:** Councillor Peter Golds

This Council notes that the Royal Borough of Greenwich voted to approve changes to the Bye Laws relating to the Greenwich and Woolwich Foot Tunnels which it has administered since 1986. However these have never been implemented as no agreement was reached between the council's of Newham, Tower Hamlets and the Secretary of State.

### **The Council further notes:**

Much of the controversy has arisen because of an attempt to permit cycling in the tunnel, despite being prohibited for over eighty years.

The report to Greenwich council stated

“No consultation on the proposals has been undertaken, or considered necessary. The Friends of Greenwich and Woolwich Tunnels are aware of the proposals.”

It continued,

That with regard to Community Safety there are no significant implications arising from this Report.” and:-

“That with regard to Health and Safety there are no significant implications arising from this report.” Concluding:-

“That with regard to Health and Wellbeing there are no significant implications arising from this Report.”

However, the Department of Transport guidance on shared facilities states:

“Converting a footway or footpath to allow use by cyclists should only be done after a rigorous assessment has been carried out. It is vital to ascertain whether it is the best option or not. This can only be done after all on-road solutions have been fully considered and rejected as unsuitable. If so, the conversion must be carefully designed to meet the needs, as far as is practicable, of all its intended users.”

That it is obvious that no assessment, let alone a rigorous assessment, has been undertaken by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

That the tunnel is designated as a foot tunnel.

That residents of Tower Hamlets are concerned about the safety implications of cyclists riding through the tunnel, which is extremely narrow in places and completely unsuited to joint usage by cyclists and pedestrians.

Over the rent holiday period pedestrians were assaulted by a cyclist speeding in the tunnel, oblivious to families and children.

The Council under this administration, resolves to undertake a rigorous and impartial assessment as to Health and Safety before approving any changes to the byelaws relating to cycling in the foot tunnel.