


Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Council</b>  17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Petitions to Council</b>	

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

## SUMMARY

1. This report sets out details of the valid petitions submitted for presentation and debate at this Council meeting. The text of the petitions received 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 those petitions for debate (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.
  - a. There is one petition for debate containing more than 2,000 signatures:  
 Petition requesting Tower Hamlets Council to re-open the Boundary Estate Community Launderette.
  - b. There are no petitions to be heard or noted.

## **PETITIONS TO BE DEBATED**

The standard format for a Petition Debate for debate is as follows.

- The petitioners to present their petition for a maximum of three minutes.
- Questions and answers to the petitioners for four minutes.
  - Members asking questions, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate at this stage.
- Debate amongst Members for 15 minutes.
  - During the debate speeches are limited to a maximum of three minutes.
  - If any motions are moved during the debate, at the end of the debate the motions will be put to the vote in the order tabled. Regardless of whether any motions are passed, the petition will also stand referred to the relevant Corporate Director for a written response.
- At the end of the debate, the Speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) a Cabinet Member to respond to the matters raised.
- If no motion is moved during the debate, the petition will stand referred to the relevant Corporate Director for a written response.

### **3. MOTIONS ON THE PETITION**

- 3.1 During their speech any Member may move a motion for the Council's consideration on matters relevant to the petition (this does not require the suspension of standing orders). It is requested that Motions relating to the petition be submitted to Linda Walker, Interim Director, Legal Services and Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to allow full circulation.
- 3.2 Following the petition debate, any motions moved will be put to the vote.
- 3.3 In relation to executive functions, the Council does not have powers to override any executive decision of the Mayor or substitute its own decision. The Council may however pass a motion expressing a view on

the matter or referring the matter to the Mayor, calling on him to take some action, or consider or reconsider a decision, with recommendations to inform that consideration. Officers will advise on the constitutional validity of any motion that may be moved.

## **NOTES**

4. Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.

## **5.1 Petition requesting Tower Hamlets Council to re-open the Boundary Estate Community Launderette.**

### **Statement:**

Boundary Estate Community Launderette operates from 28 Calvert Avenue, a shop owned by Tower Hamlets council. The Launderette has been serving the diverse local community on the estate and surrounding areas of Tower Hamlets and Hackney for over 30 years. Set up by residents in 1992 as a direct response to mould and damp issues in their flats, this service is still as much needed today as it was then. It is a well-used and loved community resource that local residents and businesses depend upon.

On Friday 9 February, without warning, staff arrived to find that their keys no longer worked. Bailiffs, commissioned by Tower Hamlets Council, had changed the locks. It transpires that the council's asset management team are demanding a 6-fold rent increase with on year's rent to be paid in advance. We are shocked that the council have used such aggressive measures to remove a valued amenity that provides value for money, providing an essential service and employment for four local people.

Issues of mould and damp and their detrimental effect on residents' health have been well-reported in recent years. It is a systemic issue here on our estate and on countless others. Residents need a convenient facility to wash and dry clothes locally, to alleviate these problems. The Launderette has become an important community space for those who suffer from loneliness and isolation as they use it to meet other residents and for some it is their only means of social interaction. Loss of our Launderette will result in the deteriorating mental and physical health of residents and a worsening condition of the asset fabric of our estate. The cost to the council of affordable rent for this vital community service will be paid back many times by the benefits to the health of our community and the infrastructure we inhabit.

We the undersigned, call on Tower Hamlets Council to:

- grant a temporary tenancy at will under the previous terms, with immediate effect, to enable the Launderette to resume operations immediately pending negotiation of a new lease
- add the Launderette premises, 28 Calvert Avenue, to the Tower Hamlets Community Portfolio of Community Premises
- agree that the Boundary Estate Community Launderette is eligible for Community Benefit Rent Reduction

**Submitted by:** Jonathan Moberly, Vice Chair, Boundary Tenants and Resident Association

**Signatures received:** 2151