


Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>COUNCIL</b>  22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2025	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	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 Labour 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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.

## **OPPOSITION MOTION FOR DEBATE ON BEST VALUE**

**Proposer: Cllr Amy Lee**

**Secunder: Cllr Mufeedah Bustin**

### **This Council Notes:**

1. The Best Value Inspection Report, commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, identified areas where the Council has not met its Best Value Duty under the current administration led by Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Aspire.
2. The report raises concerns about the Council's culture, noting:
  - “The lack of trust between councillors, officers, and partners is extremely worrying and is not conducive to good governance and decision-making.”(Section 3.4)
3. Leadership and accountability are highlighted as areas for improvement, with the report stating:
  - “The perception of many interviewees was that many good managers had exited the organisation as a result of ‘speaking truth to power.’” (Section 4.50)
  - “Inspectors found the council’s scrutiny culture to be ‘weak and confused,’ with ‘The level of challenge or in-depth scrutiny offered, or exhibited has in our view been inadequate.’” (Sections 10.17 and 5.120)
4. A staff survey conducted by the inspection team revealed that 48% of respondents expressed discomfort in raising concerns, and only 27% believed their concerns would be appropriately dealt with. The report also notes:
  - “We have seen evidence that staff are also concerned by some appointments and consider them inappropriate. In our staff survey we heard about a ‘friends and family culture,’ ‘cronyism’ and that some staff are concerned that existing relationships between councillors and officers changes the way work is done in the Council.” (Section 4.4)
5. The report expresses concerns about the Council’s capacity to improve without external oversight:
  - “They found insufficient evidence that the organisation is open and transparent, and values the constructive criticism required to drive improvement. The Inspectors therefore express concern that the Authority will not make sufficient progress to deliver and embed these changes without external accountability.” (Letter from SoS to CEX 12/11/24)

### **This Council Believes:**

1. The findings in the Best Value Inspection Report highlight serious challenges for the Council's governance and leadership, with potential implications for the effective delivery of essential services to residents.
2. Addressing concerns about the Council’s culture, accountability, and scrutiny processes is vital to rebuilding trust and ensuring high standards of governance.

3. Staff, officers, and residents deserve a Council that operates with transparency, respect, and accountability, prioritising professionalism and inclusivity.
4. External oversight can play a constructive role in supporting the Council to address systemic issues and implement meaningful reform.

**This Council Resolves to:**

1. Acknowledge the findings of the Best Value Inspection Report and commit to taking sincere action to address the challenges it highlights.
2. Collaborate fully with the appointed government envoy and statutory support team, welcoming their expertise and input in driving improvements. The Council will work constructively with external leads on governance, leadership, and culture to restore confidence in its operations.
3. Ensure work is taken to include all political groups in the improvement process and include opposition members on the transformation board.
4. Prioritise creating an open and collaborative culture within the Council, ensuring staff and residents feel their voices are heard and valued in the decision-making process.