

## **BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING – 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2012**

### **AMENDMENT TO AGENDA ITEM 5.1: BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2012/13**

**Amendment proposed by: Councillor Anwar Khan**

**Amendment seconded by: Councillor Carlo Gibbs**

#### **This council notes:**

- UK economic growth since the coalition came to power nearly 2 years ago has been just 1.1%, compared with 1.2% in the second quarter of 2010 at the end of the Labour Government
- The UK jobless rate stands at 2.69million or 8.5%, its worst level since 1995 and an increase of over 200,000 since the coalition came to power. The increase in unemployment has hit women and young people particularly hard with youth unemployment now standing at over 1 million
- The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Government's ideologically driven cuts, including a reduction in our formula grant by 16.8%, have damaged the UK's economic growth, increased unemployment and hit the most vulnerable in society
- The Government's planned changes to housing benefits, council tax benefit, legal aid and other proposals will have a particularly heavy impact on Tower Hamlets residents
- That it is the council's responsibility to show leadership in the face of these damaging changes in order to best protect and support our residents
- That Mayor Rahman's budget fails to reduce wasteful spending, cuts frontline services, fails to protect the vulnerable and will leave the streets of Tower Hamlets dirtier than when he was elected.

#### **This council believes that:**

##### **Supporting the vulnerable**

- Reductions in funding in last year's budget for the in-house Homecare team aimed at running down the in-house team by 2015 risk significantly reducing the quality of care received by the most vulnerable people in our community
- Mayor Rahman should use the next year to identify funding to keep a high quality in-house Homecare team to serve the needs of the most vulnerable service users beyond 2015
- Housing Benefit changes being implemented by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government will result in many residents falling into debt
- As Corporate Parents the Council has a responsibility to prioritise the needs of our children in care
- Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of domestic violence in the country and incidents of rape are on the rise across London, and that more needs to be done to support vulnerable women and girls
- Pensioners in the borough face rising food and fuel costs and high inflation, increasing their cost of living and reducing their quality of life

##### **Housing**

- Many residents in the privately rented sector live in poor quality housing as a result of rogue landlords
- The Mayor's Decent Homes programme does not significantly address poor insulation and fuel poverty and completing work without improving the thermal efficiency of properties could result in many experiencing worse cold, damp and condensation problems

- Residents are often forced to refuse much needed new homes in Car Free developments because they need a car

### Employment

- Many young people in Tower Hamlets cannot afford to undertake internships that could improve their employability
- The lowest paid Council staff should benefit from the same one-off £250 payment that national government workers were awarded

### Environment

- Cuts to frontline cleanliness services – including reductions in street sweeping last year, and charging for bulk waste and pest control – will result in a dirtier borough and an increase in vermin
- The Mayor has proposed to fund a reduction in charges for car parking permits in properties with multiple cars, whilst many residents are denied a parking permit for even one car when they are offered a property in a Car Free development

### Transparency and value for money

- The Town Hall is inaccessible to many residents and in order to increase transparency the council should live stream council meetings
- The use of taxis by members and officers and refreshment at meetings should be curtailed to more acceptable levels

### This council resolves to implement the following amendments:

Savings	Saving in 2012/13
Reduce refreshments at meetings	£2,400
Delete Olympics Ambassador SRA after Olympics	£3,880
Delete funding for feasibility study for afterschool patrols and complete study using existing officer time	£10,000
Delete avenue of trees proposal	£10,000
Delete signposting to HMRC and replace with information in Business Rates mailer	£10,000
Reduce discretionary spend on taxis for officers	£15,000
Reduce all spend on taxis for members (leaving £6,000 to fund a lease car for use of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker on official visits)	£9,000
Reduce communications spend by D&R and CLC	£30,000
Reduce funding on award ceremonies and staff conferences by holding them at council facilities	£30,000
Delete energy co-op feasibility and complete study using existing officer time	£30,000
Delete additional Liberal Democrat spend on advertising in East End Life	£30,000
Use of reserves contribution	£328,720
<b>Total</b>	<b>£509,000</b>

Spend	Costs 2012/13
Register of Housing Landlords – self-funding paid for by an admin fee, to be made compulsory for all landlords wishing to receive Local Housing Allowance payments	£0
Ring-fence £1m of New Homes Bonus out of the £10million allocated to Decent Homes for insulation to reduce condensation, damp and fuel poverty	£0
Ring fence any increase in New Homes Bonus income above projected levels (up to £1m) to Decent Homes reserve	£0
Commission debt support and advice for 150 case through Capitalise service	(£24,000)
Restore funding to Greenwich & Docklands festival	(£25,000)
Fund a 0.5 FTE Mental health worker for care leavers	(£25,000)
Live streaming of council meetings	(£25,000)
Fund a “Violence Against Women and Girls” worker	(£50,000)
Ring fence £56k from future S106 monies to support 20 residents to undertake unpaid internships, paying the living wage for up to 3 months	£0
Give a one off staff award of £250 for low paid council staff	(£115,000)
Give a £50 Council Tax rebate to pensioners	(£245,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(£509,000)</b>

**This council further resolves:**

- To call on the Mayor to implement the following amendments to the budget

Changes to parking permits	
Increase cost of second permit to £30	£90,360
Keep £150 additional cost of 3rd permit	£40,800
Extend Car Free Devevelopment permits to 1 and 2 bedroom properties	£8,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£139,160</b>

Changes to CLC budget	
Keep first bulk waste collection free	(£115,000)
Not charging for rat control	£0
Reduce rates charged to business for external furniture and signage	(£24,160)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(£139,160)</b>