

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MAY 2012**

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD,  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**SUMMARY**

1. Fifteen motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
2. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008, the order in which the motions are listed is by turns, one from each group, continuing in rotation until all motions submitted are included. The rotation starts with any group(s) not reached at the previous meeting.
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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 are the motions that have been submitted.

## 12.1 Licensing and anti-social behaviour on and around Brick Lane

**Proposer:** Councillor Helal Abbas

**Seconder:** Councillor Bill Turner

This Council notes:

- The complaints by many residents who live around Spitalfields that the number of late night alcohol licences on and around Brick Lane is resulting in an unacceptable level of alcohol-related crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour locally, including late night noise, urination and vomiting on doorsteps, and violence.
- The request by police that the Council, as the licensing authority, adopt a saturation policy for the Brick Lane area
- That a draft saturation policy for the Brick Lane area was taken to the Licensing Committee in September 2011, but has progressed no further, awaiting the publication of guidance on Cumulate Impact Policies by the government
- That other measures, as well as the proposed saturation policy, could benefit local residents.

This Council resolves:

- To support a Five Point Plan to tackle the problem that includes:
  - A Saturation Policy for the Brick Lane area being brought forward for the consideration of the Licensing Committee as soon as possible after publication of the awaited government guidance
  - The adoption of Challenge 25 as a mandatory condition on all TH licences to the statement of licensing policy
  - Setting up a "Brick Lane Alcohol Partnership" including the trade, police, council and voluntary or community groups to better co-ordinate action, share information and build working relationships between relevant stakeholders (to be contained within existing budgets)
  - Giving police powers to implement section 30 dispersal orders from 10pm to 5am Thursday – Saturday in the immediate vicinity of Brick Lane, allowing them limited powers to move groups on where they have reasonable grounds
  - Consideration of introducing pop-up/temporary urinals, as used in Westminster, on Friday and Saturday nights, and consulting on a bye-law to increase the fine for public urination to level 2 on the Standard Scale (£500).

## 12.2 Troubled Families

**Proposer: Councillor Zara Davis**

**Seconder: Councillor David Snowdon**

This Council Notes:

- The Coalition Government plans to deal with Troubled Families is a much welcomed step in the right direction.
- Currently the government spends £9 billion a year on Troubled Families, with only £1 billion a year going to turning Troubled Families around.
- Each Troubled Family costs £75,000 a year.
- The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has 1,120 Troubled Families, the highest of any London Borough.
- This means £84 million is spent each year on Troubled Families in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

This Council Believes:

- The creation of a new Troubled Families team at the Department for Communities and Local Government will help to solve this problem.

This Council Resolves:

- To support the setting up of a national network of Troubled Families 'Trouble Shooters'.
- To work with the Coalition government on this plan and to start to turn around the lives of London Borough of Tower Hamlets residents who live in Troubled Families.

### **12.3 Getting rid of postal voting on demand**

**Proposer: Councillor Fozol Miah**

**Seconder: Councillor Harun Miah**

This Council notes:

- 1) Judge Richard Mawrey, who presided over the trial of Labour Party members and supporters in Birmingham in 2005 who had used the postal voting on demand system to defraud the elections there and who described the abuse of the postal voting system on demand as worse than a banana republic, has recently stated that successive governments have done almost nothing to address the multiple flaws in the system and that the system remains wide open to fraud
- 2) the Respect Party and some principled individuals from other parties have campaigned against the postal voting on demand system since at least 2004 whilst the Labour Party in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere has defended the postal voting on demand system
- 3) recently six Tower Hamlets Labour councillors wrote to the Electoral Commission claiming irregularities in postal voting in the by-elections in Spitalfields and Banglatown and Weavers wards
- 4) complaints about postal voting abuses made by other parties, including Respect, have in the past been fobbed off by the Electoral Commission
- 5) by contrast the Electoral Commission has called in the police to investigate the allegations made by these six councillors
- 6) the prime minister, responding to a Conservative MP's attack on the postal voting on demand system, claimed the priority should not be getting rid of postal voting on demand but individual voter registration
- 7) individual voter registration will mean many poorer and less educated voters will fall off the register, thus further undermining British democracy, unless massive resources are put into individual voter registration which is very unlikely

This Council believes that:

- 1) the complaints made by the six Labour councillors are politically motivated and utterly hypocritical, given Labour's record in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere
- 2) the prime minister is also prioritising individual voter registration over getting rid of postal voting on demand for political reasons in that individual voter registration will benefit the Tory party by removing poorer and less educated voters from the register
- 3) the Electoral Commission has proved ineffective and biased in its attitude towards legitimate criticisms of the postal voting on demand system
- 4) the priority should be to get rid of the postal voting on demand system lock, stock and barrel and the integrity of British elections cannot be restored until this is done
- 5) the priority should also be to establish a proper system of proportional representation in all British elections

## 12.4 Open Spaces Strategy

**Proposer: Councillor Carlo Gibbs**

**Seconder: Councillor Amy Whitelock**

This Council notes:

o The decision of Council on 8 December 2010 that put limits on the use of Victoria Park for commercial events, whilst still recognising that some events should still be allowed

o The decision of Council on 21 December 2011 that Sir John McDougal Gardens, Millwall Park and Island Gardens should not be made available for commercial events.

This Council further notes:

o The decision of the Mayor to ignore the decision of Council o The Mayor's decision to cancel the free community event Paradise Gardens and the popular annual fireworks event in Victoria Park o That the Open Spaces Strategy is reserved to Full Council and does not currently contain a section on Commercial Events in the borough's Parks

This Council resolves:

o To amend the Open Spaces Strategy to include a section on Commercial Events in parks, to reflect the prior decisions of Council, that:

o In regards to Victoria Park

- Limits the number of large commercial music events in the park to six days each year;
- Prevents the park being used for commercial events on consecutive weekends throughout the summer, with at least two weekends free after a weekend of events;
- Sets a closing time for events to 10pm;
- Sets a reduced noise levels for commercial events.

o In regards to Sir John McDougal Gardens, Millwall Park and Island Gardens

- prevents the holding of commercial events.

o In regards to the gardens at Trinity Square:

- allow the use for weddings but prevent the holding of other commercial events.

o To exclude the Live Site events in Victoria Park in 2012 from the above.

## **12.5 History Teaching And The English Baccalaureate**

**Proposer: Councillor David Snowdon**

**Seconded: Councillor Peter Golds**

This Council notes:

- Only 11.7% of Tower Hamlets school children passes GCSE History at grades A\*-C. This is the fifth lowest number in England, ahead of only Knowsley, Newham, Kingston-Upon-Hull and Manchester.
- Over three times more school children achieve A\*-C GCSE History in the top performing council in the country, Hammersmith and Fulham.
- That the new gold standard of English secondary education, the English Baccalaureate, requires school children to have A\*-C passes in Maths, English, two sciences, a modern language and history or geography. Only 5.9% of children achieved this, in part due to the low number of history GCSEs entered.
- Tower Hamlets has the ninth lowest number of children passing A-Level History in England.

This Council believes:

- That the study of history allows our school children to develop high level analytical skills, and helps them to more fully appreciate the world around them. This in turn promotes civic and community engagement.
- That in order to increase the number of Tower Hamlets school children achieving the English-Baccalaureate we need to increase the provision of History teaching in our schools. Not achieving this standard threatens to limit the educational opportunities available to our school children.

This Council resolves:

- To instruct officers to write to all head teachers of schools within the Borough to make them aware of the Council's support for a higher provision of History teaching.
- To instruct officers to contact schools to see what barriers exist to a higher level of provision of history teaching, and report back to full council within six months.
- To ask the Mayor to champion the case of history teaching in Tower Hamlets, and investigate what he can do to promote this objective

## **12.6 Missiles at the Olympics**

**Proposer: Councillor Harun Miah**

**Seconder: Councillor Fozol Miah**

This Council notes

- 1) the exceptional security measures being taken around the Olympic games
- 2) the stationing of missiles on residential blocks in East London
- 3) the deployment of RAF typhoon military aircraft at Northolt, the first time Northolt has been used for this purpose since World War 2.
- 4) the huge inconvenience the Olympic games will cause residents of Tower Hamlets
- 5) the limited access to the Olympic games that most Tower Hamlets residents will have
- 6) the limited job opportunities made available to local residents by the Olympic games
- 7) the very limited permanent gains that are being made from the Olympic games
- 8) the enormous cost of the Olympic games, which has increased because of the exceptional security measures

This Council believes

- 1) the gains from the Olympic games originally planned by the former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone have been squandered under Boris Johnson
- 2) the security measures, and in particular the stationing of missiles on residential blocks in residential areas, have created unnecessary fear in the hearts and minds of local residents
- 3) the threat from terrorist attack in London and at the Olympic games has been increased by the involvement of British armed forces in illegal, unjustified and hugely costly wars in terms of lives lost and money spent in Iraq and Afghanistan
- 4) the best way to reduce the risk of terrorist attack at the Olympic games would be to withdraw our troops from the unwinnable and futile war in Afghanistan immediately and to acknowledge that the war on Iraq was both illegal and entirely unjustified
- 5) the exceptional security measures that have been taken to station military aircraft at Northolt and missiles on residential blocks in East London are unnecessarily causing fear and alarm amongst East London residents and should be stood down
- 6) the Mayor of Tower Hamlets should do all in his power to minimise inconvenience from the Olympic games for the residents of Tower Hamlets and to boost access, job opportunities and lasting gains from the Olympic games

## 12.7 Youth Services

**Proposer: Councillor Rachael Saunders**

**Seconder: Councillor Helal Uddin**

This Council notes:

- That the executive Mayor has decided to take the Council's youth service contracts in house.
- That the reasons given for this decision included assertions that money would be saved if the council staff rather than the third sector organisations and schools managed the provider contracts.
- That no evidence has been given for this, and no firm numbers given.
- That the decision is not in line with the principles set out in the current Tower Hamlets Children and Young People's Plan.
- That the current providers add significant value to the contracts they hold through supporting services within their own HR and IT and through running additional youth services with their own resources.
- That youth services across Tower Hamlets have improved significantly since they were first contracted out, through effective partnership working.

This Council believes:

- That in tough times it is right to work with partners to seek savings and efficiencies, and wrong to undermine relationships and act unilaterally.
- That the best youth services support educational attainment and equip our young people to lead their communities. Youth services are there to support excellence not just tackle ASB.
- That resources should reflect need, with the greatest resources for areas with the greatest youth population.
- That effective hyper local partnerships have been developed between youth services, schools, health services, employers and others through locally based management of services.
- That currently our young people are able to shape and lead their own services. This must be strengthened, not weakened, in any future model.
- That the targets that the contractors currently report against should continue to be publicly reported against if the service is taken in house.

This Council resolves:

- To oppose bringing the youth service in house at this point.
- To call on the Mayor to:-
  - Work with providers to identify efficiencies in partnership; and
  - Run a full consultation with providers and young people before decisions about the future of the youth service are made.

## 12.8 Social Landlords

**Proposer: Councillor Gloria Thienel**

**Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds**

This Council Notes:

- That the Minister for Housing and Local Government has praised social landlords such as Viridian and Home Group for their plans to publish expenditure over £500.
- That the Housing Minister calls on social landlords to follow Viridian and Home Group's example and become more transparent.
- That the government is committed to a consultation with social landlords on whether to expand the scope of the Freedom of Information Act to apply to them.

This Council Believes:

- That the example shown by Viridian and Home Group is a step in the right direction and all social landlords should consider following their lead.
- That the government should extend the Freedom of Information Act to apply to social landlords and all Housing Associations; so they will publish spending over £500.

This Council Resolves:

- To support the Government in its consultation.
- To encourage and support Housing Associations/Social landlords in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to publish all spending over £500.

## **12.9 Federation of Tenants and Residents Association:**

**Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan**

**Seconder: Councillor Shahed Ali**

This Council notes:

- That Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) has produced a Residents Charter
- That the Residents Charter sets out some basic standards which residents believe that social landlords in the borough should adopt

This Council welcomes:

- The fact that TRAs are working together to give residents a voice in the important task of securing improvements in service standards of social landlords.

This Council believes:

- That all social landlords should sign up to the Residents Charter

This Council resolves:

- To endorse the Residents Charter which the Federation has produced
- To request the Mayor to ask social landlords in the borough to commit to meeting the standards set out in the Charter.

## **12.10 Queen's Diamond Jubilee**

**Proposer: Councillor David Snowdon**

**Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds**

This Council Notes:

- That the Queen is to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee this year, marking 60 years of the Queen's reign.
- The Queen came to the throne in 1952 and her coronation took place in 1953. The Queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1977 and her Golden Jubilee in 2002.
- The Queen is the second longest serving Monarch of the United Kingdom, and the longest serving Monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- Currently the Queen is the second longest serving Monarch in the world.

This Council Believes:

- The Queen's 60 years since her succession, ought to be commemorated.
- That the Monarchy under the Queen's stewardship is still an integral part of our national life today as it was 60 years ago.

This Council Resolves:

- To request the Speaker of the Council to send a congratulatory letter to the Queen, on behalf of all of the Councillors and the Council.
- To record our gratitude to the Queen for her 60 years of service and to His Royal Highness Prince Phillip, The Duke of Edinburgh, for his service to Her Majesty the Queen and the country.

## 12.11 Welfare Reform Changes

**Proposer:** Councillor Oliur Rahman

**Seconder:** Councillor Rabina Khan

This Council notes that:

- On Tuesday 24th April the BBC and other news outlets reported that Newham Council was investigating the possibility of housing homeless residents outside the borough, as after housing benefit reforms residents could not afford to live in the borough.
- In Tower Hamlets, the changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) means that 77% of LHA recipients will see a reduction in income.
- Despite Grant Shapp's comments that there is a National Discretionary Housing Payments Fund of £91m, Tower Hamlets has received only £490,000.
- Residents in the borough are now receiving collectively £3.2m less than before April 2011 in benefits.
- On 28th February 2012 The Mayor and Key Partners in Tower Hamlets signed a Welfare Reform Pledge, which committed the Council and key partners to limiting the impact of Central Government's reforms on Tower Hamlets' Residents.

This Council believes that:

- Grant Shapp's MP's defence of Housing Benefit Reforms was disingenuous and ignored the unique circumstances faced by inner London boroughs.
- These Central Government reforms will have a disproportionate impact on Tower Hamlet's residents, as it limits the level of housing benefits to large families and in areas of high rents.
- This is a deliberate attempt by the coalition government at social engineering.
- Inner London should remain somewhere people on all incomes can live.

This Council resolves:

- To continue to work with all partners to develop solutions which will help residents to stay in the borough.
- To support the lobby for a larger Discretionary Housing Payments Fund for London Boroughs.
- To support the lobby for a living rent.
- To offer support and guidance to any families who find themselves in financial difficulties due to these changes.

## **12.12 Abuse of elderly and vulnerable patients motion**

**Proposer: Councillor Gulam Robbani**

**Seconder: Councillor Abdul Asad**

This Council notes that:

- The BBC's Panorama programme on the 23rd of April exposed shocking abuse of elderly and vulnerable patients at a London Care Home.
- This is one of a series of exposures of systematic abuse in care homes.
- Tower Hamlets provides high quality care provision for many elderly and vulnerable residents, including at the award winning Sonali Gardens.

This Council believes that:

- The care of elderly and vulnerable residents is one of the most important responsibilities of local government.
- All residents of care homes have the right to the highest quality of care, as well as the right to live in dignity and be treated with respect.

This Council resolves:

- To condemn all forms of abuse in care homes.
- To call on the Government to improve the national inspection of Care Homes.
- To improve our own systems of reporting and investigating abuse to ensure that all vulnerable people in our care receive the highest standards of care.

## 12.13 Recession

**Proposer:** Councillor Rania Khan  
**Seconder:** Councillor Shafiqul Haque

This Council notes:

1. Tory driven austerity measures are not working; spending cuts have shrunk the economy, strangled growth and driven Britain into a double dip recession. Unlike the United States, UK economic output has yet to return to the levels before the recession began four years ago.
2. This economic picture is set to worsen; national debt is expected to continue rising, from 67.3% of GDP this year, to peak at 76.3% of GDP in 2014/15, contrary to George Osborne's claims that his cuts would reduce the debt.
3. With over 96% of the government's cuts have yet to be implemented, Noble prize winning economist Paul Krugman warns that Britain faces "a death spiral of self defeating austerity" unless this government is forced to change track.
4. The human cost of government austerity is immense. The impact on women is particularly harsh. The Womens' Budget Group <<http://www.wbg.org.uk/AboutUs.htm>>, a group of independent experts who have been working with the Treasury to analyse the effect of economic policies on women, estimate that:
  - \* Lone parents and single pensioners - most of whom are women - will suffer the greatest reduction in their living standards due to public service cuts.
  - \* The cuts will lead to hundreds of thousands of women losing their job. 53% of the jobs in the public sector services that have not been protected from the cuts are held by women. The pay and conditions of all public sector workers, 65% of whom are women, are likely to deteriorate.
  - \* Cuts in welfare spending fall disproportionately on women's finances. Child benefit is paid almost 100% to women; while 53% of housing benefit claimants are single women. Both benefits have been cut significantly in real terms and eligibility has been tightened.

This Council agrees:

1. There are economic alternatives that will cut the deficit while not endangering growth and fermenting inequality and social division. The government should look across the Atlantic and follow President Obama's alternative of Keynesian-style state intervention which has reduced unemployment and brought growth back to the USA.
2. To support calls for a Plan B for the economy, outlined by over one hundred leading economists last year (Guardian Saturday 29 October 2011) which would include 'reversing cuts to protect jobs in the public sector, directing quantitative easing to a green new deal to create thousands of new jobs, increasing benefits to put money into the pockets of those on lower and middle incomes and thus increase aggregate demand. This could in part be paid for by the introduction of a financial transactions tax.'

3. To support the call for 'Robin Hood' taxes on the financial sector. A tiny tax on short-term, casino-style trading, which employs a small number of highly paid bankers in London, not the tens of thousands employed in high street financial services, would raise an estimated £20 billion. Research by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) shows that the sector can comfortably afford paying another £20 billion in tax.

4. That in light of the fact that the financial sector is responsible for the current economic crisis, and that they have received huge handouts from the public purse, the bankers have a moral responsibility to repay their debt to the British people.

5. That the priority for this council will be to follow policies that seek to protect residents, and their quality of life, from the impact recession by maintaining frontline services, protecting lower waged staff, reducing housing waiting lists and overcrowding by meeting the Mayor's affordable homes pledge, reducing energy bills via the setting up of new borough-wide energy co-op, and campaigning for a programme of public investment to create jobs and improve infrastructure.

## 12.14 Time to Change campaign

**Proposer:** Councillor Abdul Asad

**Seconder:** Councillor Ohid Ahmed

This Council notes:

1. Tower Hamlets Council has partnered with MIND and Rethink to become the first council in the country to support the current phase of their Time to Change campaign.
2. The purpose of the campaign is to promote greater awareness about mental illness and tackle the stigma surrounding it.
3. An estimated 1 in 4 people will suffer from mental health issues at some stage in their lives. As the recession worsens more people are suffering from stress, anxiety and depression as redundancies, job insecurity and pay cuts soar.
4. The negative impact of mental illness becomes all the more severe when those suffering from it also have to deal with others peoples negative reactions.

This Council agrees:

1. To endorse the Time to Change campaign to promote greater awareness about mental health, and to challenge the stigma around mental illness in the borough.
2. To combat stigma in the workplace using Time to Challenge resources. These are tailored resources for line managers <<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/need-support/employer>> and employees <<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/need-support/support-workplace>> , with advice on issues such as making reasonable adjustments, disclosure, and creating a mentally healthy workplace.
3. To incorporate mental health training into induction or training programmes.
4. To promote the Time to Change pledge; individuals and organisations can pledge to help end mental health prejudice, by signing up online <<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/timetotalk/pledge>> or on our pledge postcards <<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/shop/pledge-posters-postcards>> .
5. To review policies and procedures to ensure the council sets a standard for others in challenging discrimination and promoting wellbeing at work.
6. To encourage a culture of openness. Enabling people to speak out about their own experiences of mental health problems help to empower others to feel able to do the same.

## **12.15 Hate Crime/Islamophobia**

**Proposer: Councillor Alibor Choudhury**

**Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

This Council notes:

- The Evening Standard and other right wing blog's negative reporting and portrayal of Tower Hamlets is having detrimental effect on the reputation of our diverse and unique borough
- The newspaper's continued insinuation of an extremist network in Tower Hamlets is incorrect
- That Tower Hamlets has a good record of community cohesion underpinned by the 'No Place for Hate Campaign' and the vision of One Tower Hamlets
- That the recent reports from the Standard and other sections of the right wing media targeting Tower Hamlets and its Muslim residents borders on Islamophobia and undermines the work of 'No Place for Hate Campaign' in Tower Hamlets
- That all hate crimes are an extreme display of prejudice and discrimination of a person, group or community due to their race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or faith
- That all hate crimes are abhorrent and must not go unchallenged.

This Council believes

- That the Evening Standard and other right wing blog's portrayal of the Tower Hamlets is misleading and not balanced
- All residents irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and faith have the right to live in dignity and be treated with respect without vilification by the media
- All forms of hate crimes including faith hate are abhorrent and must be opposed wherever they occur
- Islamophobia is a specific form of hate crime related to negative assumptions about people of the Muslim faith

This Council resolves:

- To condemn the Evening Standard and right wing blog's for the persistent negative reporting and portrayal of this borough and its people
- To condemn members of this council who resort to feeding right wing journalists information to damage the reputation of this borough and its people

- That we cannot allow right wing media prejudice to denigrate the Bangladeshi and Muslim community from our borough
- That all residents lose from the right wing media's negative portrayal of Tower Hamlets, especially young people applying to university and residents applying for jobs
- That these communities are an important part of Tower Hamlets and they must be supported
- To call on the government formally to recognise anti Muslim hate as Islamophobia.