

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2013**

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

**SUMMARY**

1. Set out overleaf are the questions submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Executive at the Council meeting on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013.
2. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted.
3. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. There is a time limit of thirty minutes for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any question not answered within this time will be dealt with by way of a written response. The Speaker will decide the time allocated to each question.
5. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

27 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

### **8.1 Question from Councillor Denise Jones**

In December in Wapping Woods two women were stabbed in separate incidents that made residents frightened to go out. A public meeting was quickly organised by me and the police Safer Neighbourhood Team to brief residents and listen to their concerns about safety in Wapping. Can the Mayor tell the Council what steps officers have taken to improve public safety in Wapping since these stabbings took place?

### **8.2 Question from Councillor Peter Golds**

In 2011 the Parliament approved the "Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity". Tower Hamlets Council has chosen to ignore this code, in particular by continuing to publish East End Life at cost to the taxpayer.

The Government has announced that to ensure compliance of the Code of Recommended Practice legislation to be introduced which will empower the Secretary of State to make a direction requiring compliance with some or all of the Publicity Code's recommendations.

Will the Mayor announce when he proposes to cease publication of East End Life, which contravenes the Code?

### **8.3 Question from Councillor Khales Ahmed**

In a time of significant cuts why does the Mayor think it is right to increase his staffing and advisor budget by over 65%?

### **8.4 Question from Councillor Harun Miah**

Does the Mayor agree that this month's increase in the cost of tube and bus fares by an average of 4.2% and in some cases by as much as 7.1% is unacceptable; will present an additional challenge to the tens of thousands of Tower Hamlets families who rely on public transport to get to work, school, college, university and to see friends and family; and will he in light of this undertake to write to Mayor of London Boris Johnson expressing our view that Transport for London should end its policy of above inflation fare rises for bus and tube passengers?

### **8.5 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah**

Earlier this month the Tory Mayor of London revealed his budget including proposals to halve the number of police stations in Tower Hamlets. What steps will the Mayor take to mitigate the impact of these cuts?

### **8.6 Question from Councillor Zara Davis**

What action has been taken by the Council to prevent Tunnel Runs occurring in the Westferry Circus underground roundabout, since the meeting between the Council and Police on 5th December?

### **8.7 Question from Councillor Shiria Khatun**

What plans does the Mayor have to ensure that all of the borough's major roads and walkways are gritted and ice free during the cold winter months?

### **8.8 Question from Councillor Gulam Robbani**

Does the Mayor share our concerns regarding the high level of gaming machines in use in Tower Hamlets that has been in the news recently?

### **8.9 Question from Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012 the Council passed a motion resolving:

- To call upon the Mayor to undertake a full independent review of the 2012 Baishakhi Mela to ensure that it met all of its contractual obligations and provided a service which best served the community.
- To call upon the Mayor to make public the findings and report of the independent review into the 2012 Baishakhi Mela and to report back to Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013 on the findings.

Can the Mayor explain what progress has been made on this issue?

### **8.10 Question from Councillor Tim Archer**

Will the Mayor outline what meetings he has had with London City Airport and who he has nominated to serve on the Consultative Committee to alleviate the problems faced by Isle of Dogs residents as a result of noise pollution from flights from the increased flights from London City Airport?

### **8.11 Question from Councillor Rachael Saunders**

On what basis did the Mayor agree to cut public health services?

### **8.12 Question from Councillor Stephanie Eaton**

Does the Mayor share my concern about the impact of the 2005 Gambling Act and the increase in the number of betting shops in the Borough and the potential impact that gambling may have on vulnerable residents, and, will he ensure that the LBTH Gambling Policy contains measures to:

- Prevent gambling from being a source of crime and disorder
- Protect children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling
- Protect people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling due to a mental impairment, alcohol or drugs

and will the Mayor include in the LBTH Gambling Policy measures to:

- Control access to gambling premises by children under the age of 18
- Require licensed premises to have a nationally registered proof of age scheme
- Require licensed premises to operate a self-barring scheme for problem gamblers
- Require licensed premises to provide Gam Care, or similar, information
- Require licensed premises to record attempts to enter by under-age people
- Require licensed premises to record incidents of attempts to enter by those who are voluntarily excluded, those subject to mandatory exclusions, children attempting to enter with complicit adults.

and will the Mayor ensure the LBTH Gambling Policy encourages licensed premises to prevent customers:

- Increasing the amount they have decided to gamble
- Enter into continuous gambling for a prolonged period
- Continue gambling when they have expressed a wish to stop
- Regamble winnings
- Chase losses

### **8.13 Question from Councillor Joshua Peck**

Is the Mayor planning to sign up to the LCC 'Safer Lorries Campaign' pledge which will help to improve the safety of residents by ensuring councils only sign new contracts with the safest haulage companies, which meet specified safety conditions?

#### **8.14 Question from Councillor Dr Emma Jones**

What is the Mayor doing to improve the lighting and remove the overgrown shrubbery in Wapping Woods?

#### **8.15 Question from Councillor Bill Turner**

How many vacancies were there in each of the last twelve months in a) the CSF directorate and b) the AHW directorate, and what percentage of these were social workers?

#### **8.16 Question from Councillor Fozol Miah**

Due to the current economical slow down many small businesses are struggling to survive. Many are finding it hard to pay their business rates. What is the mayor doing to help these business?

#### **8.17 Question from Councillor Mark Francis**

Does the Mayor intend to change the council's homelessness policy to allow officers to cease the statutory duty to homeless families and vulnerable single people through the offer of a tenancy in the private rented sector?

#### **8.18 Question from Councillor David Snowden**

What steps is the Mayor taking to fix the potholes on the roads of the Isle of Dogs?

#### **8.19 Question from Councillor Amy Whitelock**

What assessment has the Mayor / Lead Member made of the impact that the Government's 28% cut to the Early Intervention Grant will have on children's services in the borough?

#### **8.20 Question from Councillor Kabir Ahmed**

We were extremely concerned to hear about the recent stabbing incidents at Wapping. Can the lead member inform us what has been done to reassure local residents in that area?

#### **8.21 Question from Councillor Anwar Khan**

What steps has the Mayor taken to assess the economic, employment and regeneration impact of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics on Tower Hamlets?

### **8.22 Question from Councillor Craig Aston**

In view of the interest by the Mayor in the career of George Lansbury, is the Mayor aware that when George Lansbury was inaugurated as Mayor of Poplar in both 1919 and 1937 the ceremony took place at Poplar Town Hall, Poplar High Street, which was also the venue for the meeting in which Poplar Council resolved not to levy the LCC and Metropolitan Police precepts, which resulted in the Local Authorities (Equalization) Act of 1921.

Therefore, would the Mayor explain to the public why he authorised the sale of this historic building at a low price to purchasers with close connections to him and his administration?

### **8.23 Question from Councillor John Pierce**

What targets has the Council set to reduce air pollution in Tower Hamlets in this EU year of clean air?

### **8.24 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan**

According to article 5 of the council's constitution, speaker of the council should exercise impartiality in presiding over council meetings. In his failure to allow due debate on several items in recent months, the speaker of the council has failed in this. Can the council ensure that the speaker abides by the constitution and not a party line?

### **8.25 Question from Councillor Gloria Thienel**

What advice did the Mayor receive in regards to the ownership of the Henry Moore sculpture 'The Draped Seated Woman' prior to his aborted attempt to sell it?

### **8.26 Question from Councillor Maium Miah**

We were pleased to hear the Mayor announce that a new youth centre will be built at Dame Colet House at the site of the old Haileybury youth centre. When can residents expect to see this youth centre open?

### **8.27 Question from Councillor Lutfu Begum**

Can the Mayor update this meeting on the steps this Council is taking to prevent violence against women?