

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 23rd JANUARY 2013

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

SUMMARY

1. Eighteen motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 23rd January 2013.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21st May 2008, the motions are listed by turns, one from each group, continuing in rotation until all motions submitted are included. The rotation starts with any group(s) whose motion(s) were 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 Motion regarding Tower Hamlets Cultural Heritage

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor Tim Archer

This Council Notes:

- That in 1962 Henry Moore sold to the former London County Council his bronze work of art, The Draped Seated Woman, which was presented to the people of Stepney and located in the Stifford Estate and became popularly known to residents as 'Old Flo.'
- That the sculpture passed to the former Greater London Council on April 1st 1965 and upon the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986, it passed to the London Residuary Body.
- That following the winding up of the London Residuary Body, assets were distributed for care amongst the 32 London Boroughs and the Drape Seated Woman was passed into the care of the London Borough of Bromley.
- That in 1997 'Old Flo' was moved by Tower Hamlets Council to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.
- That in 2010 Councillor Tim Archer undertook a survey amongst residents as to the future of the sculpture with the alternatives of selling the sculpture or bringing it back to Tower Hamlets. As a result of this survey, a Council Meeting in 2010 the Council unanimously agreed a motion proposed by Cllr Archer to return the sculpture to Tower Hamlets and display it for the benefit of all local residents.
- That Mayor Rahman attempted to sell the statue without consulting the people of the Borough.
- That the sculpture, following the winding up of the London Residuary Body, is in the care of the London Borough of Bromley
- That the London Borough of Bromley wish the sculpture be returned to London and located in the Docklands Museum so it is available for all Londoners to experience.

This Council Further Notes:

- The poor advice the Mayor and Cabinet received in their decision to sell the sculpture.

This Council Resolves:

- To call on the Mayor to confirm to Christies that the sculpture is not available for sale.
- To call on the Mayor to undertake an independent investigation as to the legal and ownership advice provided to the administration. That this investigation should examine all internal and external advice submitted to the administration.

12.2 Motion regarding Fare Cuts

Proposer: Councillor Harun Miah

Seconder: Councillor Fozol Miah

This Council condemns 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%

This Council notes that this means fares are rising above inflation again at a time when squeezes on wages and household budgets are being experienced by tens of thousands of Tower Hamlets families; and recognises that this increase contradicts Mayor of London Boris Johnson's election promise to 'hold down fares'. This council believes that when central government is embarking on its draconian austerity programme targeting the financial security of the most vulnerable, it is the role of local government such as the Greater London Authority to lessen, not add to, the burden on the shoulders of ordinary citizens.

This Council believes that Tower Hamlets is best served by policies that make public transport accessible and affordable, and that this is crucial for the social and economic prosperity of our Borough and the well being of its residents.

This Council resolves

- To call on Transport for London to end its policy of above inflation fare rises for bus and tube passengers; and
- To ask the Mayor to write to Boris Johnson setting out these concerns and the impact of current fares policy on those who live and work in Tower Hamlets.

12.3 Motion regarding Fire and Police Stations Closures

Proposer: Councillor Abdal Ullah

Seconder: Councillor Denise Jones

This Council notes:

- That the first duty of politicians is to protect residents.
- That crime has been increasing in Tower Hamlets and across London.
- In 2009/10 there were 26,989 crimes reported in Tower Hamlets, in 2010/11 there were 28,670 and in 2011/12 there were 29,485. This represents over a 9% increase.
- Last year Tower Hamlets had by far the greatest number of fires in London (1,523) as well as the 5th highest call outs for specialist fire services (1,821) and the 3rd highest for false alarms (2,586).
- In total in 2011/12 there were 5,930 call outs attended by Tower Hamlets Fire Brigade.

This Council Further Notes:

- Boris Johnson has proposed £65m cuts to the London Fire Brigade and over £300m cuts to the London Police Service budget.

Fire Brigade

- The October LFEPA paper, Redesigning Emergency Cover for London – update paper proposed options which put Whitechapel, Bow, Bethnal Green and Poplar fire stations at risk of closure.
- The cuts for Tower Hamlets Fire Brigade come on top of additional cuts to neighbouring boroughs with Silvertown in Newham (1 pump) and Kingsland in Hackney (2 pumps) both earmarked for closure. This will have a significant impact on Tower Hamlets' ability to deal with major incidents.
- Last year the target set by Tower Hamlets Fire Brigade for fires in the home was 227 however the actual number of these fires was 308, this is over 35% higher.

Police Service

- Tower Hamlets lost 58 PCSOs (45%) and 103 Police Officers (13%) between March 2010 and April 2012.
- The London Mayor, Boris Johnson has proposed closing three of the borough's police stations, Bow, Poplar and Isle of Dogs, as well as reducing the service at the Limehouse police station.

- The positive impact of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams introduced by the Labour Government and Labour Council in Tower Hamlets. That the SNTs helped to not only reduce crime in Tower Hamlets but also increased public confidence in the police.
- Boris Johnson's plans to cut Safer Neighbourhood Teams to the bone by cutting the teams to one police officer and one police community support officer per ward, down from six officers and staff at present.

This Council Believes:

- Putting over half of the borough's fire stations at risk of closure and planning to axe two of the borough's five police stations is reckless and a dereliction of the Mayor's duty to protect residents.
- The levels of high density housing in Tower Hamlets makes the threat and potential loss of life from fire much greater than in more less densely populated boroughs. This, paired with the fact that Tower Hamlets already has the highest rate of fires in London makes the Mayor's proposed closures completely irresponsible.
- Boris Johnson has chosen to pursue a political gimmick in giving Londoners a 7p a week cut in Council Tax which will result in massive cuts to the vital services they rely on.

This Council Resolves:

- To condemn the Mayor of London's deep cuts to fire and police stations in the borough.
- To support Labour's 999 SOS campaign against the cuts to police and fire stations in Tower Hamlets.
- To invite the Police Borough Commander to the next, post-budget, Full Council meeting to brief councillors on the Mayor of London's police station closures proposals and their impact on crime levels in Tower Hamlets.
- To invite the Fire Brigade Borough Commander to the next, post-budget, Full Council meeting to brief councillors on the Mayor of London's fire station closures proposals and their impact on the fire brigade's ability to respond to fires in Tower Hamlets.

12.4 Motion regarding Benefit Cap

Proposer: Councillor Tim Archer

Seconder: Councillor David Snowdon

This Council Notes:

1 in every 3 pounds raised in taxes by the Government is spent on Welfare

That more money is spent on Welfare than the Defence, Education and Health budgets put together.

That the Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary told the London School of Economics in 2012;

“We are the Labour Party. The party that said idleness is an evil. The Party of workers, not shirkers”

Mr Byrne also told the Labour Party Conference in 2011;

“Many people on the doorstep at the last election felt that too often we were for shirkers, not workers”

The last Labour Government left a deficit of £170 billion and over a trillion pounds worth of national debt, and Liam Byrne MP, left a note at the Treasury for his successor which stated;

“Dear Chief Secretary,

I am afraid to tell you, there is no money left.”

Over the past 5 years those living on out of work benefits have seen their income increase by 20% while those in work have seen their income increase by just 12%.

This Council Believes:

That the Coalition Government were right to cap benefit rises at 1% for the next 3 years in line with public sector workers pay.

That the Coalition Government are right to get our public finances and deficit under control following the financial mess the last Labour Government left.

This council supports Liam Byrne’s speeches of 2011 and 2012 regarding welfare, as quoted above.

This Council Resolves:

To support the Government in their steps to help people get back to work.

To support the Government’s 1% up-rating of benefits for the next 3 years.

12.5 Motion against Boris Johnson's police cuts

Proposer: Councillor Shafiqul Haque

Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

This Council notes:

1. That on 10 January 2013 Boris Johnson published his draft Police and Crime plan for London
2. That this plan will result in Tower Hamlets having lost 93 officers since 2010
3. That across London, nearly half of PCSOs will be cut
4. That Bow, Isle of Dogs, Poplar and Limehouse police stations are under threat from the Conservative mayor
5. That Safer Neighbourhood teams, whose knowledge of the local area is vital to effective policing, will be dismantled and replaced by the out-moded sector policing model
6. The recent violent attacks on women in the Wapping Woods area of the borough
7. That the Mayor of Tower Hamlets has discussed the incidents with the Borough Commander, and is working closely with the police to reassure the public and ensure that residents feel safe
8. That in the budget proposals published on 9 January 2013, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets has allocated funds for 17 extra police officers

This Council believes:

1. That the Conservative mayor's proposals are both a breach of his electoral pledges and his responsibility to ensure the safety of London's citizens
2. That the Conservative mayor's policing policies are driven by an asset-stripping mentality rather than the need to keep people safe
3. That following the recent violent attacks on women in the Wapping Woods area of the borough, the need for a well-funded police force, embedded in the local community, could not be more evident

This Council resolves:

1. To call on all group leaders to join the Mayor in writing to the Conservative Mayor of London to protest these cuts in the strongest possible terms
2. To request the Mayor to instruct Council officers to review community safety protocols in the Wapping area.

12.6 Motion regarding Blacklisting of Workers.

Proposer: Councillor Joshua Peck

Seconder: Councillor Shiria Khatun

This Council notes:

- The GMB campaign to highlight that 3,213 workers were blacklisted by construction firms and which calls for all of those affected to be given an unreserved apology and compensation by the firms.
- That in 2009 the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) seized a database of 3,213 construction workers used by 44 companies to vet new recruits and keep out employment trade union and health and safety activists.
- That of the 3,213 workers identified on the blacklist only 194 have been informed that they appear on the list.
- Of the 194 people identified as featuring on the blacklist, 39 of these were based or attempting to find work in London.

This Council believes:

- Blacklisting is an unacceptable practice which cannot be condoned.
- That the construction firms which engaged in blacklisting should apologise to those who have been affected and denied jobs as a result of the list.
- That the Information Commissioners Office should inform all those who feature on the blacklist.

This Council resolves:

- To support the GMB campaign against the blacklisting of construction workers.
- To call on the Mayor to make clear to all construction companies bidding for Council contracts that any unlawful blacklisting of workers will not be tolerated.

12.7 Motion regarding History Teaching

Proposer: Councillor Zara Davis

Seconder: Councillor David Snowdon

This Council notes:

- Only 11.7% of Tower Hamlets school children pass 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.
- 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 high grades in History, we need to increase the provision of History teaching in our schools.

This Council resolves:

To call on the Mayor 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 investigate barriers to a higher level of provision of history teaching and report back to full council within six months.
- To champion the cause of history teaching in Tower Hamlets and investigate what he can do to promote this objective

12.8 Motion regarding Defending the Welfare State

Proposer: Councillor Fozol Miah
Seconder: Councillor Harun Miah

This Council notes:

- a) the Condem government is planning an extra £18 billion welfare cuts, on top the £18 billion already in train
- b) this will condemn more families to poverty and undermine progress made in reducing child poverty in Tower Hamlets and nationally.
- c) Government attempts to depict these cuts as largely affecting the long term unemployed or disabled are misleading
- d) most of those drawing benefits are the working poor like cleaners, carers and caterers who are working hard yet need benefits to survive because of their very low pay.
- e) Britain's low wage economy and lack of jobs are driving up our benefits bill, as is our failing housing market
- f) 95% of the recent £1 billion rise in housing benefit is paid to those in work.

This Council agrees:

- a) the defence of the welfare state from Tory driven attempts to dismantle it is a political priority for the people of Tower Hamlets
- b) that Government austerity is self-defeating
- c) instead of creating growth and jobs these policies are shrinking the economy, strangling growth, increasing unemployment, and driving the country deeper into recession.
- d) that we urgently need a programme of job creation, housing building, and measures to ensure people are paid a real living wage and have access to decent, affordable and secure housing.

12.9 Motion regarding Decent Homes Prioritisation

Proposer: Councillor Marc Francis

Seconder: Councillor John Pierce

This Council notes:

- Brodick House on the St Stephen's Estate is the last big tower block remaining in the ownership of Tower Hamlets Council;
- It is home to 130 households (121 tenants and nine leaseholders) across 22 storeys;
- Brodick House was completed in 1968 and most flats within it still retain the original kitchen and bathroom;
- The block has suffered from persistent problems with water penetration for many years and an ineffective storage heating system that tenants have to supplement with expensive electrical heaters;
- These problematic conditions undermine the health, education and life chances of the hundred or so children in Brodick House and the well-being older residents;
- In 2005, Old Ford Housing Association demolished two similar blocks on the Monteith Estate (Antrim House and Cavan House) and upgraded the remaining (Clare House) at a cost of around £6 million;
- In 2010, East End Homes upgraded two similar blocks (Berkeley House and Grafton House) at a cost of around £10 million each;
- The reduction in Government funding for Tower Hamlets Council's remaining estates means that, in Years 1 and 2, it has concentrated resources on those homes that are easiest to bring up to the Decent Homes Standard;
- The Budget indicates that £25 million should be available for Decent Homes works in 2013/14 and £45 million in 2014/15.

This Council believes:

- The Conservative – Lib Dem Coalition Government is wrong to force councils to prioritise works on those properties with least problems;
- Tenants in Brodick House have suffered too long in very poor conditions and that improvements to the block, including new kitchens, bathrooms, and a new heating system should be a council priority.

This Council resolves:

- To call on the Mayor to commit to prioritise the most in need blocks, such as Brodick House, in the Decent Homes programme for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

12.10 Motion regarding Social Landlords

Proposer: Councillor Emma Jones

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 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 that 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 that 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.

12.11 Motion regarding the impact of Housing Benefit 'reform' on women and families

Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Seconder: Councillor Rabina Khan

This Council notes that:

1. Since April 2011, the Tory-led government has implemented cuts to housing benefit that include decreasing the local housing allowance level, increasing non-dependant charges, increasing the threshold for age threshold for the Shared Accommodation Rate of Local Housing Allowance from 25 to 35 for new claims.
2. In April 2013, the government is due to implement the most severe of all the reforms – The Benefit Cap of £500 for a couple and £350 for a single family.
3. The Council has launched a Prepare and Act Now Campaign to ensure that residents are aware of the changes and can seek advice and assistance from the Council and third sector organisations.
4. Of the 149 families visited by housing officers last week, 50% were single mothers, this compares to the percentage of single mother families in our entire borough's population, of around 7%.
5. The November 2012 Homeless Bound study from the National Housing Federation (NHF) shows that 1,660 families with children and pregnant women were temporarily living in B&Bs in the three months after January last year in London, the South East and East of England, a 60% increase on 2010 figures.
6. The Lead Member for Housing has written to the two new housing ministers, Mark Prisk MP and Don Foster MP, as well as to Simon Hughes MP, The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats to raise awareness of the impact these reforms will have on the residents of Tower Hamlets.
7. That following these representations the borough has been granted a three month grace period before the implementation of these changes.
8. That the budget proposals published by the Mayor on 9th January include £1m to help those made homeless by the changes.

This Council believes that:

1. These measures will have an adverse and disproportionate effect on Tower Hamlets residents.
2. The Benefit cap will increase the difficulty for residents on housing benefit to pay for private sector rent in this borough.
3. The disproportionately affected single mother households are some of the most vulnerable people in our community and many of these families will have been housed by the Council, following domestic violence incidents.

4. Many of these families have deep roots in Tower Hamlets, including family networks and will have children at local schools.
5. The impact of welfare reform on these women will be devastating – removing them from support networks they rely on and making it more unlikely they will access employment

This Council resolves:

1. To condemn the Tory-led government's policy of targeting the cuts at our most vulnerable residents.
2. To encourage councillors from all parties to work with the Mayor to lobby against these policies which clearly have a discriminatory affect on the residents of Tower Hamlets.
3. To continue to highlight the negative impact these reforms will have on families in Tower Hamlets, especially single mother families.
4. To continue offer support and guidance to residents, to ensure they are aware of the changes and have the support they need to prepare for them.
5. To support the proposal by the Mayor to allocate £1m to help those made homeless by the changes.

12.12 Motion regarding High Earners and Council Housing

Proposer: Councillor Gloria Thienel

Seconder: Councillor Tim Archer

This Council Notes:

- There are some 6,000 Council houses across the UK that have tenants earning more than £100,000 a year living in them.
- That it has been reported that there are 15,000 tenants in social housing earning more than £80,000 a year.
- That there are a number of such tenants resident in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. These people including key supporters of the Mayor and his administration.
- That the Minister for Housing and Local Government has brought forward plans that would give social landlords new powers to increase rents for high-income tenants.

This Council Believes:

- That these new powers granted to social landlords by the Department for Communities and Local Government will help solve this problem and return much needed social housing to those in need.

This Council Resolves:

- To support the Department for Communities and Local Government in putting in place these new powers.
- To encourage all Social Landlords in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets not to subsidise rents for those high earners earning over £80,000

12.13 Motion against erasing the history of Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Seconder: Councillor Gulam Robbani

This council notes:

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) are currently undertaking review of Tower Hamlets Ward Boundaries
2. The decision of the LGBCE on 13 November 2012 to adopt Conservative proposal to abolish the name Banglatown from Spitalfields & Banglatown.
3. The decision of the LGBCE to break up the East India and Lansbury ward and rename it Poplar North.
4. The decision of the LGBCE to abandon the St Dunstan's ward name
5. That the decision was taken following representations from the Conservative Party in Tower Hamlets.
6. That Cllr Peter Golds, Leader of the Conservative Group has stated in an interview with satellite TV station channel S that *'what will happen if every single tiny group in the country suddenly decides they want their local government ward named after it. What are we going to have, Earls Court and Kangaroo Valley for the Australians?'*
7. That the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Lutfur Rahman has written formally, on behalf of the residents of Tower Hamlets, to the LGBCE, to reinstate 'Banglatown', 'Lansbury' and St Dunstan's in their final review of historic ward names and boundaries.

This Council resolves:

1. To condemn in the strongest possible terms the clear attempt by the Conservative Party, led by Councillor Peter Golds, to attempt to abolish historic ward names.
2. To acknowledge the deep offence caused by Councillor Golds' attempts to influence the LGBCE in this way, and demands that the Conservative Group leader publically apologise to the residents of Spitalfields and Banglatown for the offence and upset he has caused both with the initial proposals and subsequent remarks on the matter.
3. To endorse the Mayor's position on retaining these historic ward names.

12.14 Motion in support of the London Living Wage

Proposer: Councillor Abdul Asad

Seconder: Councillor Shafiqul Haque

This council notes:

1. That in November 2008, the then Leader of the Council and now Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Lutfur Rahman, instituted the London Living Wage in the Council.
2. That the Council is seeking to extend the Living Wage into its agreements with sub-contractors to ensure that they too pay a fair and decent wage to workers.
3. That the Labour Leader Ed Milliband pledged to bring in a living wage for all government contracts.

This council believes:

1. That paying a living wage is a cornerstone social and economic justice.
2. That in these times of Tory-led economic stagnation, cuts and devastating welfare reform, it is more important than ever to ensure that the incomes of the most vulnerable are protected.

This council resolves:

1. To reaffirm its commitment to the London Living Wage
2. To support the Mayor in the battle to continue to ensure the Council's contracting practices use every measure within the law to widen the agreement to deliver the London Living Wage.

12.15 Motion against Free Schools

Proposer: Councillor Shahed Ali

Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

This council notes:

1. The recent decision by the planning committee to grant permission to Wapping Free School to operate from the former Polly Peck offices on the corner of New Road and Commercial Road.
2. That national Labour Party policy is consistently opposed to Free Schools
3. That only 1.7 per cent of pupils at the first Free School to establish itself in Tower Hamlets are on school meals, compared to 48 per cent for the borough as a whole.
4. The remarkable improvement in GCSE results by the borough's children that has been achieved by years of investment by the Mayor and his Labour predecessors in the borough's state schools and teaching infrastructure.

This Council believes:

1. That Free Schools are divisive, elitist and a negative influence on community cohesion.
2. That the Labour Party's national stance against Free Schools should be endorsed.

This Council resolves:

1. To ask the Mayor to write to the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, to highlight the unrepresentative and divisive nature of Free Schools.

12.16 Motion supporting Energy Co-operatives

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

Seconder: Councillor Shahed Ali

This Council notes:

1. That the Mayor has launched an initiative to sign people up to an energy co-operative that will allow them to purchase gas and electricity much more cheaply than through mainstream providers.
2. That to date nearly 2000 people have expressed interest in joining the co-op.
3. The recent news reports indicating “Libor-like” manipulation of the price of energy by the big providers.
4. That it has secured £40,000 from central government to support this scheme.

This Council believes:

1. That encouraging residents to sign up to the energy co-op is an effective way to ease the burden of Tory-led cuts, economic stagnation and welfare reform.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on Group leaders to work with the Mayor to publicise the Energy Co-op and the benefits it could bring to residents, especially those on low incomes.

12.17 Motion on Recorded Votes

Proposer: Councillor Rania Khan

Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

This Council notes:

1. That Council's constitution includes a provision for 'Recorded Votes'.
2. That this provision is designed to allow for maximum accountability.
3. That until 25 January 2012 the threshold of members required to trigger a Recorded Vote in Full Council was 10.
4. That on 25 January 2012 a motion was carried by a majority in Full Council increasing the threshold from 10 members to 20.
5. That this threshold is unreasonably high without precedent in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere.
6. That in Camden, the threshold is 7 members, in Barnet it is 10 members, in Newham it is 6 members, in Westminster it is 10 members, and in Greenwich it is 5 members.

This Council believes:

1. That the 'Recorded Vote' thresholds are generally low so that a minority can make their views known when votes go against them, to communicate to the public that whilst something they did not support may be Council policy, it is not unanimous and the minority opposed it.
2. That having a threshold of 20 members defeats the object of this provision, since (assuming whipping) recorded votes can only go ahead if the majority group is in favour.
3. That raising the threshold from 10 to 20 members was a backward step as regards the health of local democracy, and a grave mistake.
4. That having the highest threshold in the land, particularly when compared to the other aforementioned London boroughs, is deeply embarrassing for this authority.

This Council resolves:

To lower the threshold of support required to trigger a recorded vote from 20 members to 7 members.

12.18 Motion to protect Spitalfields open space

Proposer: Councillor Gulam Robbani

Seconder: tbc

This Council notes:

1. The decision of the planning committee to grant planning permission for a local school to build on the churchyard adjacent to Christ Church Spitalfields.
2. That the church is one of the finest examples of baroque architecture in Europe and has grade 1 listed status.
3. That the land, a disused burial ground, is held in trust by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets
4. That Spitalfields is the most densely populated area in London and that green space is at a premium.

This Council believes:

1. That it has a duty to ensure that the site is managed in a way that allows the public to enjoy and make use of the open space.
2. That there are suitable alternative sites in the borough for the proposed development.

This Council resolves:

1. To protect the churchyard from development and to work with relevant stakeholders to identify alternative sites.