

## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

##### **General comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

The proposals balance, with the items that increase expenditure and reduce income equalling those that reduce expenditure and increase income.

A number of proposals involve expenditure mainly in the form of staff severance costs in order to reduce costs and these would need to be met from Council reserves and contingencies. The exact amounts would depend upon the extent to which it was possible to redeploy staff.

Some proposals would also be subject to the Councils organisational change procedure and so would not be implementable from 1<sup>st</sup> April. In these cases, expenditure on new growth would not be able to start until the change process had been completed.

More details are provided in the detailed comments.

##### **General comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)**

None. Specific comments are provided for relevant proposals.

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Events in Parks**

Generate £10,000 through private sector sponsorship of Council organised events.

**Officers' comments:**

Officers would endeavour to generate this income.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

This amendment should be considered alongside the proposal to reduce commercial income by £290,000

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Commercial, corporate and private events in parks**

Remove income target to generate £290,000 through commercial, corporate and private events in parks

**Officers' comments:**

The income target for parks from commercial use currently stands at £460k this includes £90k for corporate and private events and £100k contribution towards the Victoria Park Business Plan which is an HLF requirement.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

The contract with HLF does require the Council to contribute towards the Victoria Park business plan and should it fail to do so, the HLF can require repayment of the grant.

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Bulk Waste Charges**

End bulk waste charges. £60,000 reduction in income

**Officers' comments:**

The loss of income would be £60,000.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

There is clear potential for demand for the service to increase as a result of abolishing the charge which could add to the costs of the service, including landfill and waste disposal charges.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**

## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Police Officers**

Increase funding by £1,108,000 for Police Officers through established Metropolitan police scheme to use funding stream created by abolition of THEOs.

**Officers' comments:**

This item needs to be read alongside the proposal to delete funding for THEOs in order to provide funding for police officers.

There are 16 accredited (empowered) THEO posts. Total £850k pa.

With regard to non accredited THEOs (markets), there are 14 permanent posts, approx total £582k pa.

There are also 4 part time FTC posts at total of £87.3k pa.

In total therefore, £1.520m is currently budgeted for the THEOs service (before the Mayor's additional allocation for next year). Of this £670,000 is charged to the Street Trading Account is therefore not available as a General Fund saving, leaving £850,000 in a full year from savings through deleting the THEOs service.

In addition there is a balancing figure available because the savings and income creation proposals in amendment exceed other growth and income reduction proposals by £258,000.

The Council and the Police work in partnership to deal with a variety of concerns regarding crime and ASB. The introduction of the THEOs is a practical example of this partnership in action. The THEOs are a civil enforcement team who have been accredited by the Metropolitan Police Service, to deal with certain types of ASB. The council has a legal obligation to undertake a variety of enforcement and investigations functions in addition to the police. The THEOs are a generic service which enables the council to effectively deal with a of enforcement functions.

The police introduced the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme because they realise that the increasing demands and expectation of the public with regards to ASB continues to rise, the reality is that this will only continue. The police support the development of the accreditation scheme because this provides an opportunity for additional street based enforcement officers to deal with ASB concerns without placing additional demand on police resources.

The THEOs compliment the work of the police and SNTs, they are empowered by the police and council to respond to the low spectrum of concerns which we know affect the community, issues which the police are unable to deal with due to more serious demands or are not strategic police priorities.

The introduction of the THEOs has been able to demonstrate this very well. For example prior to the introduction of the THEOs, the issue of street drinking by vagrants was a real concern for the community of Whitechapel. Despite consistent request by the community for the local police SNT to respond, they were unable to do so effectively because they had to manage competing demands. The THEOs were able to be tasked to the area, undertake patrol, effective enforcement and supportive intervention; the result being a significant improvement with a 97% reduction in calls to the police, which reduced the pressure on call demand for the police and enable the resources to be redirected to other priorities.

The THEOs are council staff which offers much greater flexibility and responsiveness in dealing with issues reported to by the community. Unlike police officers, the staff are able to undertake patrols and have a visible presence within the community. They are not pulled away to be redirected to provide additional resources to pan London concerns, arrests, court appearances etc.

The councils CCTV system is an excellent tool in dealing with crime and ASB concerns, however it is only as effective as the response provided. Experience has shown that due to other priorities, it is often the case that the police are unable to respond to incidents happening and captured on CCTV; resulting in the suspects not being caught. However because the THEOs are council staff, they are available, are directed to respond and are able to deal with the incidents appropriately.

It is a fact that the police will hardly ever deal with matters related to dog fouling, litter, fly-tipping etc. The officers are likely to be distracted or redeployed to more pressing matters. The THEOs however are able to deal such issues, providing a visible and timely intervention.

The council currently funds additional police officers schemes, which although effective are often redirected to other strategic policing priorities. The council is unable to have command and control decision making and is limited in its ability to scrutinise performance.

The response to crime and ASB concerns will continue to require a flexible approach. The effective partnership between the council and the police which has introduced the THEOs recognises the value the CSAS officers provide. To consider removing this option would be a serious error and would not advance success of either the council or the police in dealing with crime and ASB. It is now the case that several London Boroughs have sought to replicate our model.

The cost of laying off our own staff and replacing them with Metropolitan Police officers would need to be taken into account in any proposals.

In addition the THEOs currently provide the Out of Hours Noise Service which would need to be reprovided.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

This proposal is linked to a proposal to delete all existing THEO posts. Such a proposal would be likely to result in redundancy and would be subject to the Council's organisational change procedure. The start date for additional police officers would therefore need to await the conclusion of this process.

Any redundancy payments to THEOs would need to be met from Council reserves set aside for the purpose. This would be substantial cost in view of the numbers of staff involved but the exact amount would depend upon the number of deployments that were achieved.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

##### **Item: 1% Council Tax Rebate**

Provide a rebate equivalent to a 1% council tax cut to all households paying council tax £633,000

##### **Officers' comments:**

The rebate could be arranged under powers provided by the Local Government Act 1992. The rebate would not reduce the rate of Council Tax but would provide funding from Council budgets to provide a one-off rebate to all Council Tax payers equivalent to 1% of their bill, net of discounts.

A rationale for a rebate at this time would be to alleviate the impact of Council Tax on residents during harsh economic times.

A permanent reduction in Council Tax would not be prudent given the budget gap facing the Council in 2015/16, but this scheme would be temporary.

Each year the Government sets rules that prevent increases in Council Tax which the Secretary of State deems excessive. The rules for 2014/15 have not yet been set.

##### **Additional Financial comments (if any)**

Relevant comments are set out above

##### **Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None



**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Library Book Fund**

Reverse cuts to the Library Books Fund £200,000

**Officers' comments:**

It is within the Council's powers to increase spending on the Book Fund.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

## BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

### BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

#### OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

**Item: ESOL Classes**

Fund ESOL classes in order to further "One Tower Hamlets Agenda"  
£152,000

**Officers' comments:**

This proposal needs to be seen alongside the proposal to reduce spending on translation services.

Last year the service received one-off ESOL funding (£175k) which was used to develop and run pilot courses for people who has ESOL need but for whom courses previously on offer were not suitable, plus it was used to develop the third sector to deliver these and other ESOL courses. As a result 850 people on the waiting list for suitable classes were accommodated.

Idea Store Learning is currently working with 31 voluntary organisations to submit a consortium bid for a Govt grant for CBEL (Community Based English Language ) to help continue the work begun with the pilot schemes . However only six of these grants will be given nationally and one in London.

Should the additional funding be made available it will be invested into the on-going programme to embed ESOL in across a wide range of adult learning, support more classes and quality improvement in teaching working with third sector providers.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

An equalities impact assessment would be required before implementing this proposal.

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Pot Hole Repair**

Create a pothole team to visit every road in borough each year and undertake necessary repairs £120,000

**Officers' comments:**

This will increase resources for dealing with pot holes

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Out of Hours Noise Nuisance Service**

Create a new 7 days a week noise nuisance service, to reverse cuts implemented in previous years by Mayor £100,000 increase

**Officers' comments:**

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

Reprovision of the Out of Hours Noise Service is necessary if the THEO service is discontinued.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Docklands History Boards**

Replace Docklands History Boards located across Isle of Dogs and Limehouse Basin which were installed by LDDC and are now in a poor state of repair £50,000 increase

**Officers' comments:**

This sum would be used to work in partnership with landowners to renovate and maintain Heritage Boards

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Streaming of Council Meetings**

Stream Council meetings over the internet increase £25,000

**Officers' comments:**

This would cost from £25k p.a., representing the cost of a webcasting service/equipment leasing contract. There are a number of possible providers. Lead-in time would be approx. 2 months for installation/training etc.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: TfL Travel Card for Mayor**

Provide Mayor with a Zones 1-3 TfL Travel Card so that he can travel to meetings like most Londoners do: via London Transport allows abolition of Mayor's car, driver and means taxis will not be necessary increase £1,424

**Officers' comments:**

This could be provided.

The proposal needs to be seen in the context of the proposal to remove funding for the Mayor's car and driver.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

**None**

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**

## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

##### **Item: Existing THEO posts**

Delete all existing THEO posts, in order to fund more real police officers £850,000 saving to the General Fund.

##### **Officers' comments:**

This item needs to be read alongside the proposal to provide additional police officers by using the funding released by abolishing the THEO service.

There are 16 accredited (empowered) THEO posts. Total £850k pa.

With regard to non accredited THEOs (markets), there are 14 permanent posts, approx total £582k pa.

There are also 4 part time FTC posts at total of £87.3k pa.

In total therefore, £1.520m is currently budgeted for the service (before the Mayor's additional allocation for next year). Of this £850,000 is charged directly to the General Fund and the balance to the Street Trading Account.

The Council and the Police work in partnership to deal with a variety of concerns regarding crime and ASB. The introduction of the THEOs is a practical example of this partnership in action. The THEOs are a civil enforcement team who have been accredited by the Metropolitan Police Service, to deal with certain types of ASB. The council has a legal obligation to undertake a variety of enforcement and investigations functions in addition to the police. The THEOs are a generic service which enables the council to effectively deal with a of enforcement functions.

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The cost of laying off our own staff and replacing them with Metropolitan Police officers would need to be taken into account in any proposals. This is likely to be substantial because of the number of officers involved (the maximum figure would be likely to exceed £1m) , but the exact amount would depend upon the number of redeployments achieved. Funding for this would need to come from Council reserves and contingencies.

In addition the THEOs currently provide the Out of Hours Noise Service which would need to be reprovided.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

The proposal would be likely to result in redundancy and would be subject to the Council's organisational change procedure. The start date for additional police officers would therefore need to await the conclusion of this process.

Any redundancy payments to THEOs would need to be met from Council reserves set aside for the purpose.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

The Council would have to follow its procedures for termination of contracts of employment including consultation.

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Faith Buildings**

Delete Proposed increase in faith buildings programme £1,000,000 saving

**Officers' comments:**

This would reduce the funding available for grant support to faith buildings which would henceforth be restricted only to providing capital grants.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

£1,000,000 of the faith buildings programme is currently met from the revenue budget; the balance of the Mayor's proposal is to be funded from capital. In order to reduce the revenue budget as intended by this amendment, the funding for the revenue grants programme would be discontinued.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Proposed 10 THEO posts**

Delete proposed THEO posts, in order to fund more real police officers  
£500,000 saving

**Officers' comments:**

This would delete the Mayor's amendment to provide temporarily for additional THEO posts for the next two years.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

Since the Mayor's proposal is only funded for the next two years, deleting it would also only provide additional resources for two years.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**

## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: East End Life**

Abolish East End Life and instead, provide housing choices information on the Tower Hamlets website and in all One Stop Shop & RSL offices. Remove general marketing & adverts budgets, cut 10% of budget for public notices based on better design of adverts £346,024 saving

**Officers' comments:**

The motion proposes to 'delete funding of £1.214m from the budget used to fund East End Life'. East End Life is budgeted at net nil cost with funding from both external and internal advertising – therefore there is no budgeted funding of £1.214m. However £556k of EEL's income comes from internal sources for a variety of purposes.

Statutory notices currently cost the council £267k and whilst it would be possible to purchase advertising elsewhere in a single publication with much lower circulation there is no evidence that this would cost less in the commercial sector. The East End Life Review of 2011 found that the replacement cost would be between £600k and £2.1m depending on the mix of advertising required. Other London councils including Newham, Hackney and Greenwich with a similar newspaper market have kept their council publications owing to the high cost of alternatives.

The amendment also proposes to cut departmental budgets by £143k to reduce advertising spend on East End Life. This sum is not fixed and is dependent on service requirements so would reduce the ability of services to communicate with service users and the wider community. Given the council's legal duty to promote race equality and also its duty to promote public health, reduce the fear of crime and foster social cohesion the cost of alternatives would need to be factored into the budget calculations.

East End Life is audited and reaches 83,000 households a week, with a 60% readership level, making it the most effective communications tool in the borough.

Choice based lettings advertising could be reduced as described in the proposal – however it does mean that users will need to visit the key locations on the off chance that a suitable property was available. The 2011 review

found that many homeseekers found the existing service extremely valuable and 81% of Housing Choice users who responded to the survey supported the continuation of East End Life for this purpose.

The closure of East End Life would result in the loss of £627,700 of external income and the loss of a service that reaches large numbers of borough residents and small businesses, the voluntary sector and other public sector partners.

To identify the financial and equalities impact of the proposals requires a detailed review. Closing East End Life precipitously without conducting a review of advertising/communication needs and costs would thus carry significant risk resulting in unwanted outcomes eg. higher costs and loss of engagement with residents on important community services.

This review however would not be cost free and would require officer time and possibly external support. Consideration would need to be given as to whether it represents value for money to conduct another review only two years after the July 2011 review - and potentially in advance of the government's desire to lay down further guidance or legislation in the parliamentary year 2013-14.

Closure of East End Life, including a corporate change programme and reprocurement of advertising needs would take an estimated six to eight months from the decision being taken. There may be contract termination costs with suppliers that cannot be calculated yet.

In summary purchasing space for statutory notices, choice based lettings and departmental requirements in the commercial sector and printing separate publications would increase costs significantly if the council wished to achieve the same contact rate achieved through East End Life. There would also be procurement costs as any external advertising would have to go through a formal procurement process.

#### **Additional Financial comments (if any)**

The proposal would reduce advertising revenue to East End Life by nearly 30% so as the amendment anticipates, it would be likely to make East End Life unviable in its current form.

Due to the time involved in completing the organisational change process and a three month notice period on the contractual arrangements supporting East End Life , it would not be possible to close East End Life with effect from 1st

April and the saving may not therefore be available for a full year in 2013/14. Again this would need to be closed off from reserves.

Any redundancies required as a result of closing East End Life would need to be funded from Council reserves. The number of redundancies and therefore the cost depends upon the degree to which it is possible to redeploy staff within the Council. It is likely that the figure would be several hundred thousand pounds.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

The Council cannot cap statutory adverts as they are a legal requirement. Any advertising placed externally would, by law, require a formal procurement which would take at least 6 months . Even discretionary adverts are part of the Council's legal requirements on health and social care, education and other areas so they would all need review. In addition a full EQIA on the final proposals would be required to take account of effect of the proposals on equalities issues

## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Mayors Executive Office**

Reduce spending on Mayor's office by £300,000

**Officers' comments:**

This would reduce the budget from £701k to £401k p.a. – in effect reverting more or less to the 2011/12 level when the office was originally established. The reduced amount would be enough to fund the core staff of the office. The main effect would be to delete almost all the budget for the Mayoral Advisors. This is do-able legally as they are not a statutory function, but would reduce the Mayor's capacity to respond on matters requiring policy input.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

The Mayor's office is part-funded for two years from reserves and therefore a cut would not deliver an ongoing saving.

Any employees affected by this proposal would be subject to the Council's organisational change protocol and may be entitled to severance payments.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

The Mayor's advisers contracts have a notice period of one month for termination.



## BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

### BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

#### OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

**Item: Trade Union Facilities Agreement**

Review and remove full-time trade union posts £290,000 Saving

**Officers' comments:**

The current costs of salaries under the Trade Union Facilities' Agreement is approximately £290,000.

There is a statutory entitlement to time off for trade union duties, training and activities. This entitlement is set out in the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. The ACAS( Advisory, Consolidation and Arbitration Service) Code of Practice on time off for trade union duties, training and activities provides employers with guidance and advice on how to meet their statutory responsibilities.

Union representatives undertake a variety of roles in collective bargaining and in working with management, communicating with union members, liaising with their trade union and in handling individual disciplinary and grievance matters on behalf of employees. There are positive benefits for employers, employees and for union members in encouraging the efficient performance of union representatives' work, for example in aiding the resolution of problems and conflicts at work. The role can be both demanding and complex. In order to perform effectively union representatives need to have reasonable paid time off from their normal job in appropriate circumstances

Should the council move away from its current arrangements then new arrangements would need to be put in place in compliance with statutory responsibilities. Any new agreement would need to be re-negotiated with the Trade Unions. As an employer the council has a legal requirement to consult with trade unions during periods of change and employees have a statutory right to representation and accompaniment at meetings. If we do not have these arrangements in place then it will prevent timely progress of consultation and implementation of change processes and also slow down the progress of case work and will impact on employee relations.

Should there be no TU facilities agreement then every time trade union duties, training or activities were carried out they would need to be assessed and a determination made as to whether they should be paid or not. Such an

arrangement would be an administrative nightmare and not conducive to good employee relations

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

## BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013

### BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

#### OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

**Item: Translation of Documents**

Stop non-statutory translation of documents into foreign languages in order to promote our One Tower Hamlets objective and follow DCLG best-practice.  
Money to be spent on ESOL training £152,000 Saving

**Officers' comments:**

This proposal needs to be seen in the context of proposals to use this money to increase provision of ESOL courses.

In 2011/12 spending on translation services broke down as follows;

Adults, Health and Wellbeing		£23,000
Children, Schools and Families		£107,000
Communities, Localities & Culture		£10,000
Development & Renewal		£4,000
Resources		£8,000
Chief Executive's	less than	£1,000
Total		£152,000

It is unrealistic to expect that every person affected by Council services will be an English speaker. It is therefore highly unlikely that the Council could completely eliminate the requirement to translate documents and conversations for the benefit, for example, of non-English speaking members of the public who are affected by social care issues. These costs where necessary would need to be met from other Directorate budgets.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

An equalities impact assessment would be necessary before this proposals could be implemented.



## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Estate Agents**

Reduce discretionary bounties paid to estate agents for finding properties by 15% £75,052 saving

**Officers' comments:**

The incentives the Council offers are in order to provide a viable alternative to the making of a homeless application. That said, in the current property market climate, such incentives are not being as successful in attracting properties this year when compared to last and so any reductions would serve to compound this, leading to increased homelessness and all the financial burdens associated with that.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Mayoral Car**

Abolish the Mayoral car and delete post of full time driver. Provide Mayor with a zones 1-3 Travelcard, so that he will not need to take taxis.

**Officers' comments:**

The cost of the car and chauffeur is £49,500 a year.

This proposal needs to be seen in the context of the proposal to provide a Zone 1-3 travelcard for the Mayor's use.

In practice deletion of the car & driver will probably necessitate use of taxis which will reduce the amount saved.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

Termination costs of the lease on the Mayor's car would need to be considered.

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#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

##### **Item: Mayoral Policy Communications**

Stop Mayoral policy communications by top-slicing the budget of departments that spent £37k on Mayoral communications last year

##### **Officers' comments:**

There is no budget for these communications which are arranged on an ad hoc basis at the behest of Directorates and funded from within Directorate budgets. The high profile example during 2012, which related to the Council Tax Support Scheme, cost £37,000 and was funded from earmarked reserves.

##### **Additional Financial comments (if any)**

Since there is no budget for this item, a reduction of this amount would need to be found from within Directorates budgets by reducing general expenditure.

##### **Additional Legal comments (if any)**

Any such publications would have to conform to the recommended Code of Practice on Publicity.

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: "Media Monitoring"**

Stop media monitoring activities £35,000 saving

**Officers' comments:**

The authority currently spends around £35,000 a year on media monitoring, the purpose of which is to ensure that the Council is aware of media coverage affecting it (of which there has been a great deal) and is able to respond in a timely fashion and to avoid the considerably greater cost of having officers undertake the work manually and by purchasing a vast array of publications. Officers have been looking at a way for this to be provided more cheaply and a saving of £5,000 will be pursued through a procurement process during the next financial year.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None



**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Town Hall Subscriptions**

End our subscription to the LGIU, Randalls Parliamentary Service, Plain English campaign and the Association for Public Service Excellence; submit notice to LGA to end subscription £27,150 saving

**Officers' comments:**

This would reduce the Council's access to policy briefings, relevant information and networking events.

Tower Hamlets would be one of a few authorities that had resigned from the LGA. The LGA is the main representative body for local government in England which engages with Government and opinion formers to lobby for the interests of local authorities. Whilst Tower Hamlets would continue to benefit from this lobbying effort, the loss of the subscription would reduce the LGA's capacity to do this work.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Watering of Pot Plants**

End budget for contractors to water pot plants; instead encourage staff to water the pot plants next to their desk in the Council offices £22,000 saving

**Officers' comments:**

The budget for maintaining pot plants is £22,000 a year.

Plants are important for 2 reasons, (a) there is a view that where there is a high level of technology they help take out CO2 from the environment; (b) as a public building and the face of the Council we do need to retain a certain standard and appearance of the building.

There is a risk that relying on the tender loving care of busy Council staff, who are not horticultural experts, for their wellbeing would be seriously detrimental to the life chances of the plants.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

There could be termination costs involved in an early termination of the contract.

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: External Venues**

Stop hiring out external venues for internal Council meetings and away-days  
£16,000 Saving

**Officers' comments:**

Council spending on the use of external venues for meetings and conferences has been recorded at £16,000 in each of the last two financial years. It may be that the demand for external hire will increase now that the Town Hall is being used more intensively as office accommodation.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Newspaper Subscriptions**

Cut Town Hall newspaper subscriptions £12,000 Saving

**Officers' comments:**

This could be achieved in light of the fact that much of the same material provided by newspapers is freely available online.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: TV Advertising**

Top-slice the budget of departments that spent £9.5k on TV advertising last year

**Officers' comments:**

The Council spent £9,500 on TV advertising in 2011/12. There is no dedicated budget for this form of advertising, however, and decisions are made on an ad hoc basis and funded by Directorates when a need is identified.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

There is no budget for this expenditure so savings would need to be found from within Directorate budgets by reducing other items.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Refreshments at Town Hall Meetings**

End refreshments at Council meetings £5,500 Saving

**Officers' comments:**

The refreshments budget was already cut by approx. 80% back in 2010 and refreshments for most meetings were deleted or reduced to tea, coffee & biscuits at that time. This saving would eliminate the remaining budget.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Taxis for Mayor, Speaker and Cllrs**

Remove the budget for taxis for the Mayor, Speaker and Councillors £3,500  
Saving

**Officers' comments:**

Usage of taxis is now limited to occasions where a member (in practice usually a Cabinet Member) needs urgently to get to or from an engagement and public transport is either not available or is impractical (e.g. because of the speed required) or inappropriate (e.g. late at night). Neither the Mayor nor the Speaker now make use of any taxis as an official car is provided for each position

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

None

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

None

**BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

**OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**Item: Travel Allowance for Senior Council Execs**

Stop offering this perk to newly employed Senior Council Officers at £3,500 each

**Officers' comments:**

This could be achieved by altering the terms on which Chief Officers are engaged.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

No saving has been put forward against this item.

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**



## **BUDGET COUNCIL 27TH FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

#### **OFFICERS' ADVICE ON BUDGET AMENDMENT**

##### **Item: 16-18 Education Ring Fenced Reserve**

**Create a "Ring-Fenced" Reserve for education spending within Tower Hamlets to improve attainment of 16-18 year olds £1,000,000 increase**

##### **Officers' comments:**

Post 16 education remains a priority area for improvement in the borough. In the 2011/12 academic year, the A-Level average point score per pupil was 622.3, below the previous year's score of 642.4. Our performance continues to be below the national average, currently 754.4. Overall, 48.7% of 16-18 year olds in the borough are achieving three or more A Levels, again this falls below the national average of 56.7%. Achievement of level 3 qualifications (A Level or equivalent) by the age of 19 is also below national average.

The proportion of young people aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance has increased since 2008 and was 10.3% in 2012. Although this is indicative of the wider economic and employment situation nationally, it means even greater efforts are needed to ensure that young people receive high quality educational provision in order to maximise their potential.

We already have in place a number of initiatives under our 'aim higher' programme, funded until the end of the current academic year. These include academic mentoring, university links, university mentoring, masterclasses, Oxbridge activities, thinking skills and enhancement activities to broaden student profiles for CVs for University application. We are also providing one to one careers interviews for all year 11 students. In addition, the Mayor's Education Allowance is helping to encourage more young people to remain in education after 16. The allocation of further funding to support work in this area would enable us to sustain the existing Aim Higher programme (cost £260k per year) and expand the work, for example doubling the existing one to one careers interviews (cost £160k per year). It would also allow for expanding careers advice into years 12 and 13 to improve support for students in making appropriate choices post 18.

**Additional Financial comments (if any)**

**None**

**Additional Legal comments (if any)**

**None**