

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 26th JUNE 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 26th June 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 Education in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Fozol Miah

Seconder: Councillor Harun Miah

This Council notes that

1. Over 50% of Tower Hamlets school pupils are in receipt of free school meals
2. Seven out of ten Tower Hamlets pupils have parents for whom English is not their first language
3. Tower Hamlets has a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs
4. Despite these potential difficulties, Tower Hamlets schools consistently perform better at end of Primary and GCSE level than many schools in more affluent neighbourhoods and are significantly above the national average
5. All of Tower Hamlets secondary schools and 90% of its primary schools are considered good or outstanding by Ofsted
6. These extraordinary results have been achieved through strong local partnerships, a collaborative approach to the borough's children and an excellent working relationship with the local authority, and not by dismantling that system through schools opting to become academies
7. The success of Tower Hamlets schools has been recognised by the former Labour Education Secretary Lady Estelle Morris in an article in the Guardian on 27th May 2013
8. The success of Tower Hamlets schools has been consistently ignored by the current Conservative Education Secretary Michael Gove.

This Council congratulates the Mayor, his education team, Tower Hamlets teachers, parents and pupils for these extraordinary achievements in the education of Tower Hamlets children.

This Council believes:

1. There is no room for complacency in the education of our children and the council should continue to build on these achievements
2. The director of Ofsted should stop denigrating teachers and pupils
3. The road forward in Tower Hamlets does not lie down the route that the current Education Secretary intends through academisation but rather the route that has already been tried, tested and proved in Tower Hamlets

12.2 Motion regarding the EDL

Proposer: Councillor Sirajul Islam

Seconder: Councillor Rachael Saunders

This Council:

- Offers its sympathies to the family and friends of Lee Rigby. To try to use a warped view of any religion or faith to justify his murder is wrong, and cannot be tolerated.
- Calls for unity against the EDL, BNP and others who seek to stir up hatred and division. We are at our strongest when we are united, as we must be in the face of this attack in our neighbouring borough of Greenwich.
- Is deeply concerned about attacks on Islamic buildings and threats to the safety of individuals and communities.
- Notes the EDL threat to demonstrate in Tower Hamlets on the 26th August 2013 and that the Labour Group immediately wrote to the Mayor and all Group leaders asking them to join with us in opposing the march.
- Notes that John Biggs AM, Labour Group and local MPs have written to the Home Secretary and Borough Commander raising their concerns and asking for support for a ban on any march.
- Supports a ban on the EDL marching through our borough.

This Council resolves:

- To write to the Home Secretary in support of Rushanara Ali MP's request that she take steps to ban the EDL march and ensure that our community is fully protected from the EDL and other extremists.
- To work with community organisations, faith groups, local people and the police to maintain calm and safety in our community.
- To call on the independent Mayor and all councillors to unite against all forms of extremism and racism.

12.3 Motion regarding use of public money

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor David Snowdon

This Council notes that the Government have supported Tower Hamlets with £77million of additional funds for the Decent Homes Programme, £350 million for the Schools Building Programme and is supporting the Blackwall Reach Regeneration Project with public money.

The Council also notes the proliferation of banners, hoardings and unsolicited letters/leaflets with airbrushed pictures of the Mayor implying that he has personally provided this funding.

The Council therefore reminds the Mayor that he should use public money for public service rather than self promotion.

12.4 Motion regarding the EDL

Proposer: Councillor Alibor Choudhury

Seconder: Councillor Kabir Ahmed

This Council agrees:

- There can be no justification for the brutal murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich on 22 May. We send our condolences to his family and friends.
- Racist and fascists are attempting to exploit the actions of a few to whip up racism and direct hatred against all Muslims. Since Woolwich there has been a 700% increase in the numbers of reported Islamophobic incidents, including the burning down of the Islamic Cultural Centre in Muswell Hill.
- We do not hold Norwegian Christians responsible for the actions of the fascist Anders Breivik, whose 2011 rampage left 77 dead.
- We do not hold white people collectively responsible for Timothy McVeigh, the US neo-Nazi whose 1995 Oklahoma City bomb killed 168 people, or for David Copeland, the former BNP member who planted bombs across London in 1999. Nor should anyone suggest that Britain's Muslims are collectively responsible for the 22 May attack.
- We call on the media and politicians to stop using inflammatory language that feeds the fascists and racists. We must challenge Islamophobia wherever it raises its head.
- We must reject those who want to divide our communities and set them against each other, and stand fast to the ideals of anti-racism, multiculturalism and respect for all.

12.5 Motion regarding The Rise of Islamophobia

Proposer: Councillor Harun Miah

Seconder: Councillor Fozol Miah

This Council notes

1. There has been a dramatic rise in Islamophobic attacks in London since the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich
2. These attacks have included arson attacks on mosques and Islamic schools, the tearing of headscarfs from women, spitting and verbal insults

This Council deplores the murder of Lee Rigby and the Islamophobic attacks that have followed that murder

This Council asks the Mayor

1. To do all in his power to ensure that the authorities, including the police and the government, deter these Islamophobic attacks and seeks to counter this tide of Islamophobia
2. To declare that the EDL and the BNP continue to be unwelcome in Tower Hamlets as they seek to inflame racial hatred
3. To declare that he will seek to secure a ban against any attempts by racist organisations like the EDL and BNP to march in Tower Hamlets

12.6 Motion regarding 4 in 10 Campaign for London's Overcrowded Children

Proposer: Councillor Abdal Ullah

Seconder: Councillor John Pierce

This Council notes that:

- 391,000 children are estimated to be growing up in overcrowded conditions in London – a quarter of the Capital's children, including tens of thousands living in Tower Hamlets;
- This figure has risen by around 80,000 in the past decade and it set to get worse as the supply of new social housing dries up.
- The Conservative led government has led a sustained attack on social housing, including cutting funding for building and attacking social security.
- Only 134 of the 1,618 applicants for four bedroom social housing in the borough were catered for in 2012, with only 16 of those in properties owned by Tower Hamlets Council directly.
- Research has shown that overcrowding undermines a child's health, education and well-being, damaging their long-term life chances;
- The Mayor of London "Overcrowding Action Plan" sets a target to reduce the number of severely overcrowded households by just 5,500 by 2016;
- Save the Children's 4in10 campaign is calling on the Mayor of London to commit to halve the number of children growing up in overcrowded conditions by 2020.

This Council believes,

- The only solution to London's housing crisis is a significant and sustained increase in investment in new social rented housing, including council housing, for overcrowded and homeless families;
- The 4in10 campaign is right to focus political attention on the Mayor of London as his "Action Plan" is an inadequate response and fails to make tackling overcrowding a real political priority.

This Council resolves,

- To support the 4in10 campaign and call on the Mayor of London to make a commitment to halve the number of children in overcrowded homes by 2020;
- To publicise the campaign to local Labour Party members and residents to help raise public awareness of this problem and pressure on the Mayor of London to act.
- To call on the Independent Mayor of Tower Hamlets to keep his promises to local people, and deliver family sized homes.

12.7 Motion regarding the 100th Anniversary of the First World War

Proposer: Councillor David Snowdon

Seconder: Councillor Craig Aston

This Council notes that the 4th August 2014 will be the one hundredth anniversary of the commencement of the First World War.

Tower Hamlets, in common with the rest of the country, suffered grievously during this conflict which saw the deaths of thousands of local people in the front and in the 103 German Bombing raids that were launched on London and Britain.

The Council requests the Mayor to provide details of his commemorative programme for 1914 will be and how this will be undertaken in the Borough.

12.8 Motion against Boris Johnson's Tower Hamlets Fire Cuts

Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Seconder: Councillor Aminur Khan

This Council notes:

1. The deplorable decision by the Mayor of London to proceed with budget cuts that could potentially close two fire stations in Tower Hamlets
2. That on 18 October 2012, Mayor Lutfur Rahman, issued a press statement 'Save Our Fire Stations'
3. The Mayor's meeting with the FBU on 26th November 2012 to discuss how best he can support their campaign to save the fire stations.
4. The mayor supports the FBU's campaign from Tower Hamlets to City Hall on 14 June 2013

This Council believes:

1. That the Mayor of London's plans to shut 17 fire stations and axe 600 jobs will have a devastating impact on fire safety across London and Tower Hamlets.
2. That the plans to close of stations in Bow and Whitechapel, putting residents' safety at risk.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the residents of Tower Hamlets, and politicians from across all political parties, to join with the Mayor of Tower Hamlets in supporting the Fire Brigades Union's campaign to stop these cuts.

12.9 Motion regarding Commerical Events in Victoria Park

Proposer: Councillor Amy Whitelock

Seconder: Councillor Marc Francis

This Council Notes:

1. The motion passed by Council on the 16th May 2012 which resolved to amend the Open Spaces Strategy to include a section on Commercial Events in parks, to reflect the prior decisions of Council, that limits the number of events in Victoria Park to 6 days each year, prevents the park being used for commercial events on consecutive weekends, set a closing time for events to 10pm and a reduced noise limit for commercial events, and prevents commercial events being held in Sir John McDougal Gardens, Millwall Park, Island Gardens and the gardens at Trinity Square;
2. That over 400 local residents signed a petition presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, calling for the number of events to be reduced;
3. That no amended Open Spaces Strategy has been presented to Council even though it is included in the list of policies reserved for Council who have expressed a will to see the policy amended;
4. The serious damage done to the park by last summer's commercial events and the continued degradation of the park during Field Day and AS ONE in May 2013;
5. The Mayor has allowed an increased 50,000 capacity for this year's commercial events, which has resulted in even more of the eastern half of the park being cordoned off from use by the public and damage to the park's fabric and grassed areas for the rest of the summer;
6. More than 400 criminal offences were recorded at Field Day and Lovebox events last year;
7. The Mayor has recently authorised a tendering process to rent out Victoria Park for up to ten events each year in 2014, 2015 and 2016;
8. The London Borough of Hackney recently decided against agreeing a programme of multiple events on Hackney Marshes each summer after a majority of residents there opposed those plans.

This Council Believes:

1. That the Mayor should respect the democratic mandate of the Council and the wishes of residents and bring forward a revised Open Spaces Strategy which reflects the stated position of Council;
2. That the Mayor's failure to do so is clearly designed to circumvent the Council's democratic process and commit this authority to contractual arrangements with commercial companies without proper scrutiny;

3. The Mayor has no mandate to commit LBTH to a contract for the hiring of Victoria Park for commercial events beyond May 2014;
4. LBTH should use the full force of the law to recover any legal costs incurred in renegotiating a three-year contract entered into by the Mayor and Cabinet Members from those authorising it.

This Council Resolves:

1. That the Mayor should immediately suspend the tendering process for commercial events in Victoria Park;
2. The Mayor should authorise meaningful consultation with residents and other stakeholders about the scale of commercial activity within Victoria Park;
3. The Mayor should in the meantime bring forward a renewed Open Spaces Strategy to the next ordinary Council meeting, including within it the amendments set out above, to ensure a more balanced approach to commercial events while the consultation is being carried out.

12.10 Motion regarding Parks and Open Spaces

Proposer: Councillor Tim Archer

Seconder: Councillor Gloria Thienel

This Council notes the increasing commercialisation and encroachment on the Borough's parks.

This Council notes the increasing concerns of residents from Bow, The Isle of Dogs, Bethnal Green and Wapping about the future of their parks as community open spaces in an increasingly densely populated borough.

The Council calls upon the Mayor to introduce and approve an updated strategy that will be adhered to, preserving our parks and open spaces for future generations.

12.11 Motion against Boris Johnson's Tower Hamlets police cuts

Proposer: Councillor Maium Miah

Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

This Council notes:

1. That on 24 March 2013 Boris Johnson published his 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 petition by Cllr Maium Miah, supported by the Mayor, against the closure of the police station on the Isle of dogs
7. 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

This Council resolves:

To call on all group leaders to join the Mayor, protesting in the strongest possible terms with the Conservative Mayor of London, to reverse these cuts and save Tower Hamlets Police Stations.

12.12 Motion regarding Garment Workers

Proposer: Councillor Rachael Saunders

Seconder: Councillor Sirajul Islam

This Council notes the terrible loss of life in the recent factory collapse in Bangladesh. While there may be many underlying reasons for this disaster, and the Government and its agencies in Bangladesh need to continue to investigate and to hold those responsible to account, and while the rapid economic growth in sectors such as the garment industry in Bangladesh is to be welcomed, and is an important provider of wealth and employment, the event also highlights the challenging working conditions of workers in many developing economies.

This Council resolves:

1. To support and encourage closer relationships between local government bodies in the UK and Bangladesh in order that good practice and experience can be shared.
2. To ensure that it follows ethical procurement policies in its contracts, and to support campaign organisations and trade unions that promote ethical procurement and which can help to promote good employment practice and safe working conditions without stifling economic growth.
3. To encourage others, more widely but in particular in our borough, and including in Tower Hamlets schools, to follow ethical procurement guidelines.
4. To congratulate those bodies and individuals in Tower Hamlets and beyond who have helped to raise funds and support to assist those affected by the disaster.

12.13 Motion on Tax Avoidance/Evasion and the G8 Summit 2013

Proposer: Councillor Rania Khan

Seconder: Councillor Oliur Rahman

This Council Notes:

- That the UK currently occupies the rotating chair of the G8 and that David Cameron last week hosted this year's summit at Loch Erne, Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.
- That top of the agenda of the meeting was the profound need to tackle the growing problem of tax evasion and avoidance.
- That household names such as Google, Starbucks and Amazon have, over the course of the last year, been exposed as some of the worst offenders.
- That two weeks ago it emerged that Thames Water paid zero corporation tax in the last financial year, despite the company recording profits of £550million, hiking bills by 7%, increasing its boss's pay to £450,000 and incompetently flooding hundreds of Londoners' homes with sewage over the same period.
- The Tax Justice Network estimates that there is £120bn of avoided, evaded and uncollected Tax.
- The Department of Work and Pensions estimates that there Benefit Fraud of a value of £1.25bn.

This Council Believes:

- That the double-standards evident in the starkly different approaches of Central Government to desperate benefit "cheats" and wealthy tax cheats show the unfairness and immorality at the heart of this government.
- That tax evasion and avoidance is a scourge on society, particularly at a time when this Tory government and its austerity regime are forcing the poorest to pay for the excesses of the super-rich.
- That whilst international agreement on tackling this blight is to be welcomed, Central Government should also be taking measures within the UK above and beyond what was agreed at the G8.

This Council Resolves:

To support the calls by Margaret Hodge, the Chair of the Public Accounts Select Committee, for the government to take decisive action at home to put right this gross unfairness and stop corporations enriching themselves at the expense of hardworking taxpayers.

12.14 Motion regarding Child Poverty

Proposer: Councillor Shafiqul Haque

Seconder: Councillor Lutfa Begum

This Council notes

- According to the DWP An additional 900,000 people were plunged into poverty during the first year of the coalition government, including 300,000 more children.
- The entire increase in children counted as in poverty in 2011-12 came from working households.
- Children living below the poverty line were now twice as likely to come from working families than those without employment.
- The situation is likely to get worse because the statistics covered the period before a range of austerity measures and welfare cuts – including the bedroom tax and the abolition of council tax benefit – were introduced.
- The findings of the Institute for Fiscal Studies that real wages in Britain have suffered their biggest drop in over one hundred years.

This Council agrees:

- It is unacceptable that in the seventh richest nation in the world that the number of people living in poverty can increase by one million.
- Despite all the talk about 'scroungers' and generations of families never working, the in-work poverty figures expose the government myth that the main cause of poverty is people choosing not to work.
- Coalition measures threaten to reverse the positive work done in Tower Hamlets in the last decade to reduce child poverty.
- That government austerity is causing the economy to contract and wages to drop thereby increasing the numbers in work forced to rely on welfare benefits to supplement declining household income.
- Wages that people can't live on will drag a society into recession and hold it there, whether the state subsidizes those wages or not.
- Government austerity has failed. We need urgent investment not cuts to revive economic growth, reverse the decline in wages and downward spiral of people forced into poverty.

This Council resolves:

- To intensify campaigning against government austerity, support The Peoples Assembly.
- To commend the Mayor's implementation of the Living Wage in Tower Hamlets and encourage all other mayor local employers to pay the London Living Wage.

12.15 Motion in support of the London Living Wage

Proposer: Councillor Abdul Asad

Seconder: Councillor Shafiqul Haque

This Council notes:

- 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.
- 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.
- That the Labour Leader Ed Milliband pledged to bring in a living wage for all government contracts.
- That with the Government's wholesale war on the welfare state and the rights of the poorest, the living wage is more important now than ever.

This Council believes:

- That paying a living wage is a cornerstone of social and economic justice.
- 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:

- To reaffirm its commitment to the London Living Wage
- 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.

12.16 Motion regarding 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 over 3000 people have expressed interest in joining the co-op.
3. That following the success of our initiative, London Councils have now created The Big London Energy Switch; a scheme backed by 20 other London boroughs.
4. Following an Auction in April, residents who have signed up to T.H.E. Community Power, could save an average of £122 on their annual energy bills.
5. Residents can still sign up to the scheme and will receive savings through future auctions.

This Council believes:

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:

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 regarding the State Pension

Proposer: Councillor Kabir Ahmed

Seconder: Councillor Gulam Robbani

This Council notes:

- Older people have paid into the State pension throughout their working lives.
- State pensions constitute around half of the national welfare budget.
- That the Tory-led government has not included the State pension in the overall cap on welfare spending.
- That the Shadow Chancellor stated that a future Labour Government would not rule out including the State pension in the overall cap on welfare spending.

This Council believes:

- That no government current or future should take away the State pension after people have spent all their working lives paying into it.
- That the State pension should not be capped and should continue to rise annually in accordance with inflation.

This Council resolves:

- To support the Mayor in opposing any proposal to cap the State pension.
- To join the Mayor in campaigning with residents, local groups, the National Convention of Pensioners and the unions to oppose any proposal to cap the State pension in the welfare budget cap

12.18 Motion regarding Recorded Votes

Proposer: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Seconded: Councillor Shafiqul Haque

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 further notes:

1. The recent report by the electoral commission on voter fraud in Tower Hamlets that found no evidence of widespread fraud as alleged by some in the opposition.
2. That the report cited a "breakdown of trust" between politicians in this chamber and that this heightens the need for public accountability.

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.