

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 27th NOVEMBER 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 27th November 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 Antisocial Behaviour

Proposer: Councillor Gloria Thienel

Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds

This meeting of Tower Hamlets Council expresses concern at the increase of spitting and public urination which is turning many of the borough's streets and open spaces into serious health hazards.

The Council condemns those whose anti social habits damage the health and environment of our public spaces.

This Council resolves that those responsible for enforcement should undertake that existing laws and by laws are observed through penalty charges and where necessary, the prosecution of offenders.

12.2 Motion regarding Xenophobia and Immigration

Proposer: Councillor Fozol Miah

Seconder: Councillor Harun Miah

This Council notes:

- 1) with alarm that we are witnessing the development of increasing hostility, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance towards immigrants
- 2) with grave concern the tone of public discussion about immigration in the press and from politicians, which is contributing to a climate of hostility and fear
- 3) this is having a direct effect on many residents in Tower Hamlets whose country of origin was not the UK
- 4) immigrants make a net contribution to national wealth and contribute to the diversity of our rich, multicultural society
- 5) the terrible effect that recent immigration rules imposing high income thresholds for spouse to enter the country are having on family unity and life for many families with a spouse resident in Tower Hamlets

This Council welcomes the formation of the Movement Against Xenophobia (MAX) by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and the South London Immigration Monitor and agrees to affiliate to MAX alongside over 50 other civil society organizations

This Council calls

- 1) for an end to attempts by political parties, their leaders and the media to exploit racism and xenophobia for their own vested interests.
- 2) for an immediate amnesty for irregular migrants in the UK, allowing them to work and pay taxes, thus contributing fully to society.
- 3) upon the Government to reject the 'numbers game' politics of immigration and to pursue an immigration system built on human rights and the economic needs of the UK.
- 4) for the media to show responsibility and to put an end to the publication of sensational and unfounded stories which incite racial hatred and hatred towards migrants and refugees.

This Council defends the right of refugees to seek asylum in the UK under the 1951 Geneva Convention and insists that while seeking asylum, people should be treated with respect and afforded fundamental liberties.

This Council asks the Mayor to convey this message to the Government, all major political parties and the media

12.3 Motion regarding Tackling Crime in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Abdal Ullah

Seconded: Councillor Shiria Khatun

This Council notes:

- That by the Metropolitan Police's own figures crime in Tower Hamlets has increased 9% since 2010.
- Over the same period crime in neighbouring Hackney was down 3% and in Newham down 6%.
- In 2011/12 there were almost 20,000 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Tower Hamlets has the second highest levels of anti-social behaviour in London (p. 149)
- Figures in the Community Safety Plan, buried on page 130, show that between October 2009 and September 2012 robberies were up 50%, knife crime was up 49%
- In the 2013 Annual Residents Survey 41% of people said crime was one of their top three concerns, this was the biggest overall concern from residents.
- The Mayor's Community Safety Plan makes no reference to the significant increases in crime and ASB nor does it give a true appreciation of the key challenges facing the borough.
- The Mayor vetoed Labour's proposal at the 2011 Budget to fund 17 new police officers.

This Council Believes:

- That the Mayor's complacent approach to crime has meant the Council has not been focused on tackling what residents see as the most important issue facing our borough.
- The borough needs a Mayor who will show leadership in facing up to and challenging anti-social behaviour, tasking council officers appropriately and working in partnership with other organisations including the police.

This Council further notes:

- Neighbourhood policing has been essentially destroyed – many wards now have just one PC and one PCSO.
- The positive impact of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams which were 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.

- The changes introduced by Boris Johnson which have 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 under Labour.
- The CSP figures show that incidences of arson in the borough are down 31% since 2009/10.
- Boris Johnson continues to pursue his plan to close half of the borough's police stations as well as closing Bow fire station and halving the number of fire engines at Whitechapel.

This Council further believes:

- The neighbourhood policing model introduced by the last Labour Government and piloted by the Labour council was a strong and successful model for local policing.
- Under the current Mayor of London neighbourhood policing has been significantly dismantled.
- The current Mayor of Tower Hamlets has completely failed to protect the community policing model which was so successful after Labour introduced it.
- Boris Johnson's cuts to police and fire stations in the borough will have a detrimental effect on community safety.
- The closure of Bow and cuts at Whitechapel fire station will not only reduce capacity but also put additional pressure on the remaining stations and staff. This will in turn reduce their ability to undertake fire prevention outreach work and could threaten to reverse the positive gains made over previous years.

This Council resolves:

- To condemn the Mayor of Tower Hamlets for his failure of leadership in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To reassert the importance of strong and locally integrated neighbourhood policing team and to support Labour's approach to reassert a neighbourhood policing model.
- To reiterate Labour's call for the Mayor to support and fund new police officers as opposed to additional THEOs.

12.4 Motion regarding Registered Social Landlords

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor David Snowdon

This meeting of Tower Hamlets Council supports the principles of the Freedom of Information Act, allowing the press and public to find out how Government and councils behave, and spend taxpayers' money.

This Council notes that whereas Registered Social Landlords, according to the High Court, "work side by side with, and can in a very real sense be said to take the place of, local authorities", they are not currently subject to FOI requests.

This Council believes the Freedom of Information Act should be extended to cover Registered Social Landlords.

Therefore, in the absence of current legislation, the Council resolves to work with local RSL's to encourage them to adopt the Freedom of Information Act principles on a voluntary basis.

12.5 Motion regarding the Bangladesh political situation

Proposer: Councillor Harun Miah

Seconder: Councillor Fozol Miah

This Council notes:-

- 1) That many Tower Hamlets residents are of Bangladeshi origin
- 2) That many Tower Hamlets residents are extremely disturbed about the deteriorating political situation in Bangladesh in advance of the forthcoming General Election, with violence and human rights abuses increasing daily
- 3) That part of the reason for this deteriorating situation is the decision by the incumbent government not to hand over to an interim or caretaker government for the period of the election campaign
- 4) That the incumbent government has refused to respond positively to a proposal by the leading opposition party the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to engage in meaningful talks to find a way to ensure that the forthcoming elections are conducted on a level playing field

This Council calls on the Mayor to convey these concerns to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and to ask the Foreign Secretary to call on the Bangladesh government to enter into meaningful negotiations with all the principal opposition parties as a matter of extreme urgency

12.6 Motion regarding the Centenary of World War One

Proposer: Councillor Sirajul Islam

Seconder: Councillor Rachael Saunders

This Council Notes:

- That 2014 will mark the centenary of World War One.
- As time passes the personal memory of this event diminishes.
- This was the first major conflict of the modern era in which civilian communities were attacked and this included Londoners.
- Remembrance Sunday represents a unique and important point each year where we commemorate all of those who have and continue to fight for our country, especially those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.
- We should also note the sacrifice and suffering of civilian communities.

This Council Believes:

- It is important to our sense of community and legacy that the memory and knowledge of those events is never lost.
- It is an important part of our cultural heritage to remember and share in the great history of our country and the contribution of East Enders.
- That an appreciation of the decisions of the past gives us a better understanding of the world.
- That the centenary presents an opportunity to share in collective commemoration of the role of East End communities.

This Council resolves:

- To note the contribution and sacrifice of East Enders, both as civilians and as members of our and our allies Armed Forces.
- To call upon the Speaker of the Council to work with the Head of Paid Service to organise a high profile commemorative event for next year's World War One centenary.

12.7 Motion regarding Cycle Safety

Proposer: Councillor Rania Khan

Seconded: Councillor Gulam Robbani

This Council notes

- The death of a fifth cyclist in the last 8 days, 3 of which have been in Tower Hamlets
- That deaths on the Bow roundabout add to 2 fatalities in this location over the past two years
- That Mayor Lutfur Rahman has written an open letter to the Mayor of London urging immediate action
- The Mayor of London's cycling commissioner is paid £95,000 pro rata to ensure that cycle safety remains a key priority for TfL
- The £100,000 invested by Mayor Lutfur Rahman in cycling safety and other facilities for cyclists in Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes

- That cycling is a healthy, cost efficient and convenient mode of transport and the vision of London as a 'cycling city' is an important one
- That it is careless to encourage more cycling without the correct infrastructure to support cyclists
- That this support needs to be at the forefront of new funding for the Cycle Superhighways
- That current funding spent on a segregated highway contradicts advice from TfL's own 'Bikeability training' and that this disjunction reflects the weakness of the cycle superhighway policy as currently implemented.

This Council further believes

- It is unacceptable that the Mayor of London has failed to install safer infrastructure at the Bow roundabout despite repeated calls from across the political spectrum.
- That the cycling commissioner's statement that "we can't take responsibility for everyone's safety" is callous and insensitive and completely disregards the GLA's own role, having failed to act on a previous two deaths at the same location.
- There needs to be a closer relationship between those designing cycle superhighways and those promoting 'Bikeability' within TfL.

This Council resolves

- That the Mayor of London should seriously invest in infrastructure to support cyclists before encouraging cyclists to take to the roads
- That designers of superhighways need to have a greater (at least good) understanding of how to safely integrate cyclists with traffic
- That the Mayor of London urgently reviews the safety of the Bow Roundabout and provides a public apology for a failure to act since previous deaths

12.8 Motion regarding Green Spaces and Parks

Proposer: Councillor Tim Archer

Seconder: Councillor David Snowdon

This meeting of Tower Hamlets Council recognises the vital importance of public available green spaces and parks within the borough.

This Council reiterates that this is a vital community asset within Tower Hamlets, where many residents do not have their own gardens.

This Council reaffirms that our parks are much loved and appreciated by residents and therefore reject the unfortunate comments made by Councillors Shahed Ali and Rania Khan directed at those residents of the borough who are concerned about the preservation and enhancement of the borough's parks.

The Council congratulates residents of the Isle of Dogs who have come together to form The Friends of Island Gardens, a genuinely community based organisation dedicated to preserve this oasis, situated on the World Heritage buffer zone opposite Greenwich Palace and encourages other residents to get together to support their local parks.

The Council reaffirms that primarily, parks are for people, and therefore opposes the increased use of our parks for commercial events, such as those that affect Victoria Park during the summer holidays; and opposes the loss of park land to new developments.

12.9 Motion regarding Dealing with the Cost of Credit

Proposer: Councillor Anwar Khan

Seconder: Councillor Rachael Saunders

This Council notes:

- The UK-wide campaign to end 'legal loan sharking'.
- The outrageous interest rates charged by some pay day lenders
- The way in which these loans trap people in spirals of unmanageable debt.
- That as Christmas approaches these companies will seek to use public advertising to target people in our borough who are struggling to make ends meet.
- That unaffordable credit is extracting wealth from the most deprived communities.

This Council believes:

- That the lack of access to affordable credit is socially and economically damaging.
- Unaffordable credit is causing a myriad of unwanted effects such as poorer diets, colder homes, rent, council tax and utility arrears, depression and poor physical and mental health.
- That there is a need for better regulation of the payday lending sector, including a cap of the total cost of credit.
- That until such regulation is introduced Tower Hamlets Council should work with partners to do all it can to protect people from usurious lending.

This Council Resolves:

- That payday loan firms should be banned from setting up businesses in commercial property owned by the local authority.
- That pay day loan firms should be banned from advertising in property owned by the council.
- That payday loan firms should be banned from advertising in Council publications or on Council owned advertising boards, from all public computers.
- To promote credit unions in Tower Hamlets as community based organisations offering access to affordable credit and promoting saving.
- To work with school, community organisations, housing providers, faith organisations and providers of debt and money management advice to ensure that every resident of Tower Hamlets has access to financial advice and support.
- That the Council writes to the Mayor of London Boris Johnson, Sir Peter Hendy (Commissioner of Transport for London) and Vernon Everitt (Managing Director,

Customer Experience, Marketing and Communications) informing them of the Council's decision to ban payday loan advertising in the borough and asking them to consider amending the TfL Advertising Policy to include a similar ban on all London public transport.

- Instructs the Corporate Director, CLC, to report in writing to the next full Council meeting, the steps the Council or Mayor could take to limit the proliferation and impact of high street credit outlets in the borough.
- To call on the government to introduce caps on the total lending rates that can be charged for providing credit.
- To call on the government to give local authorities the power to veto licences for high street credit agencies where they could have negative economic or social impacts on communities.
- To request the Heads of Planning and Licensing to report to the next Council meeting on ways in which officers can use powers at their disposal to ensure that the Council is doing all it can to prevent the promotion, publicity or opening of payday loan outlets or providers.

12.10 Motion regarding Crime

Proposer: Councillor Maium Miah

Secunder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

This Council Notes:

1. That the figure circulated by the East London Advertiser and Tower Hamlets Labour Party of 19,412 ASB police reports from this year is actually 2,100 less than the number of ASB police reports for the same period last year
2. That John Biggs' claim that crime has increased since 2010/11 in comparison to a decrease in neighbouring East London boroughs completely belies the fact that there has been a 1.5 % decrease in crime over the last financial year (2012/13)
3. That this 1.5% decrease for 2012/13 is greater than the decrease in crime for the neighbouring boroughs mentioned by John Biggs – Hackney has seen a decrease of 0.6% and Newham has seen a 1% decrease
4. The £2m provided by the Mayor to fund extra police officers, and the £2.2m investment in THEOs for the borough

This Council Believes

1. A fall in ASB crime reports shows that additional resources allocated by the Mayor have been effective
2. A fall in crime in the last financial year is also indicative of the success of the Mayor's work, despite cuts to policing nationally

This Council Further Believes:

1. That crime statistics from a very specific time period have been used in order to deliberately mislead the public
2. The claims are an election ploy which take attention away from the success of this borough in combating crime
3. It is the duty of local politicians to be honest and open about official statistics, and they should not use statistics to scaremonger and mislead

This Council Resolves

1. That the Mayor continue to successfully invest in policing in Tower Hamlets
2. To call on Boris Johnson to cease with cuts to frontline services that, despite the success of the Mayor's own initiatives, make it harder for local councils to keep their boroughs safe.

12.11 Motion regarding London City Airport

Proposer: Councillor Ann Jackson

Seconder: Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman

This Council notes that:

- The significant noise nuisance experienced by many Tower Hamlets residents caused by planes taking off from London City Airport
- This noise nuisance continues to increase as permitted aircraft movements increase by 50,000 to 120,000 a year.
- This Council unanimously resolved to oppose any further expansion of London City Airport and has raised its concerns about the noise nuisance experienced by its residents but been consistently ignored by the Airport.

This Council further notes that:

- London City Airport will shortly apply to the London Borough of Newham for expansion of stands at the airport, to facilitate the growth of the airport and the increase to 120,000 aircraft movements a year.

This Council resolves to:

- Continue to oppose any further expansion of London City Airport
- To formally object to the Airport's most recent planning application to Newham
- To publicise in East End Life this planning application and to encourage residents to make their views known to Newham Council

12.12 Motion regarding reducing the cost of living for Tower Hamlets residents

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

Seconded: Councillor Oliur Rahman

The Council notes:

- That there is a growing national debate around the cost of living and that there are two crucial components to this debate: wages and costs.
- The Resolution Foundation study which shows that wages have risen slower than prices for 48th month in a row.
- The Conservative-led Government's abysmal record in addressing in-work poverty. Research shows that two thirds of children living in poverty live in households where one or both parents work.
- The Conservative-led Government's failure to address and regulate energy companies' rising prices. Currently 6.7 million households are living in fuel poverty, a number that has soared by almost 50% since 2010.
- The growing national impact of the Government's welfare changes, including the reduction in Council Tax Benefit, which has led to councils taking residents to court over minute amounts of money - for example, in Brent 500 of its poorest residents were summoned to court for arrears as low as £100 and in Southwark 5,800 residents were summoned for as £38.

The Council further notes:

- The Mayor has reduced the cost of living for Tower Hamlets residents by:
 - Paying the London Living Wage to all employees and contracted staff.
 - Helping 35,000 residents with council tax support.
 - Being the only council in the UK to continue to provide free homecare for the elderly.
 - Putting aside £1.26m for the Mayor's University Grant scheme and £2.75m for Free School Meals for all reception and year 1 pupils.
 - Creating a £2m Fund to Reduce Homelessness to support residents living in temporary accommodation.
 - Setting up the Tower Hamlets Energy Community Power Co-op, which delivered an average annual saving of £122 for those residents who have signed up.

The Council believes:

- The Government is failing to respond to the cost of living crisis and is exacerbating the crisis through its programme of welfare reforms, below inflation public sector pay increases and failure to address rising fuel prices.
- Reducing costs of living can be achieved through addressing both the issues of wages and costs.

- Ed Milliband is right to identify the cost of living crisis as a top priority for the country.
- That whilst National Government is failing to get a grip on the cost of living crisis, locally the Mayor is making a real difference to reducing the costs of living for residents.

The Council resolves:

- To encourage more businesses in the borough to sign up to the London Living Wage.
- To encourage more residents to sign up to the Energy Co-op.
- To endorse the Mayor's position of absorbing the costs of the Council Tax for the unemployed.
- To support the Mayor in campaigning against the Conservative-led Government's policy of austerity and complacent response to directly tackling the cost of living crisis.

12.13 Motion regarding Leaseholder Service Charges

Proposer: Councillor Marc Francis

Seconder: Councillor Carlo Gibbs

This Council notes:

- In 2008, Full Council agreed a motion authorising the Lead Member for Housing to commission an independent audit of leasehold service charges following concerns about the two-thirds increase in the level of Management & Administration fees, numerous historic disputes over the costs recharged and a Scrutiny Review which called for much greater transparency and accountability in the calculation of service charges;
- In 2009, a Project Steering Group (PSG) involving councillors, Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), Tower Hamlets Leaseholders Association (THLA) and other leaseholders agreed detailed Terms of Reference for that audit, commissioned Beavers & Struthers Ltd to carry it out;
- In spring 2010, THH attempted unilaterally to introduce new methodology for the calculation of management fees and a new policy to charge to ground floor leaseholders for services they did not benefit from, which was blocked by the Lead Member;
- In summer 2010 a draft version was produced for the PSG, identifying a series of very challenging issues for THH around the management of leasehold services, value for money, caretaking, repairs and maintenance, management and administration fees, and several Service Levels Agreements with LBTH;
- However, publication of the final audit report was delayed by the Mayoral Election in October 2010 and not finally signed off by the PSG until May 2011, by which time LBTH/THH had already begun consultation on a "Leasehold Policy Review" which was claimed to have been based on its findings;
- The Mayor and Lead Member subsequently established a Leasehold Action Plan Working Group (LAPWG), including representatives of leaseholders to bring together the Beavers & Struthers' recommendations, those of the Audit Commission and THH's own Leaseholder Service Improvement Group, and a Statement of Intent was agreed by all those involved to implement the 54 recommendations or agree an alternative remedy;
- Over the next 18 months, just five of the 54 recommendations were implemented and in October 2012, THH sent leaseholders "actuals", which included significantly increased charges in most areas, particularly block/estate cleaning, a 17 per cent "Overhead" fee and new SLAs with LBTH. They were told these costs had been calculated on the B&S audit and had actually been "dampened" and so would increase further over the next two years;
- In spring 2013, the St Stephen's Estate Leaseholders Association published a damning scrutiny report, which exposed the failure to implement the recommendations in the original Beavers & Struthers audit;

- In response, the current Lead Member for Housing & Development, is now proposing an “review” of the original B&S audit.

This Council believes:

- The Mayor and THH have not implemented the recommendations contained in the independent audit in accordance with the agreed Statement of Intent and that the original aim of increasing transparency and accountability has been lost;
- Leaseholders should be fully recharged for the costs of the services they receive, but that the 2011/12 “actuals” are not based on the methodology set out in the recommendations in the B&S audit, but are instead opaque and represent very poor value for money;

This Council resolves to call on the Mayor to:

- Explain why only 5 out of 54 of the recommendations in the B&S audit have so far been implemented;
- Explain why an 17 per cent “Overhead” has been introduced across most Heads of Charge;
- Justify the Service Level Agreements between LBTH and THH and explain what action is being taken to ensure best value;
- Instruct THH to publish a report detailing how the actions it has taken since October 2010 to achieve “savings” have resulted in reduced costs to council leaseholders and tenants.

12.14 Motion regarding Twinning Tower Hamlets and the Governorate of Jenin

Proposer: Councillor Shahed Ali

Secunder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

The Council notes

1. A formal invitation has been received from Mr Talal Dwikat, the Governor of Jenin and Mr Abu Mwais, the Mayor of the city of Jenin, inviting the borough to twin with the Governorate of Jenin.
2. The Governorate of Jenin is a scenic and mountainous province in the north of the Occupied Palestinian Territory on the West Bank. It has a rich agricultural, artistic and cultural history. It is home to a resilient population who are committed to building their communities and sharing their experiences and skills with others despite the many challenges and difficulties imposed on the province by the Israeli occupation. It is the location of many religious sites of significance to the three Abrahamic faiths.
3. The invitation to formalise a relationship between Tower Hamlets and Jenin is founded on the steadily growing friendship links which have developed over the last decade as a result of the diverse range of volunteer exchanges and mutual visits which have taken place. The friendship links nurtured with Jenin have primarily been a grass-roots residents-led initiative, with the Tower Hamlets Jenin Friendship Association playing a key role.
4. It has powers to twin with other towns and regions and that such twinning is a well-established practice done by many local authorities. Twinning binds two communities at a distance together for a variety of cultural, practical, humanitarian and symbolic reasons. Therefore, it is not a relationship to be taken lightly.
5. The importance of international relationships between the borough and other parts of the world that reflect the diversity of heritage and cosmopolitan concerns that constitutes the East End and encourages an understanding of and commitment to global citizenship.
6. Tower Hamlets is not currently formally twinned nor has it been since the 1987 Liberal administration withdrew the borough from all twinning arrangements with international contexts. Previous links in Tower Hamlets included twinning arrangements with Offenbach in Germany and with Puteaux, a Parisian suburb. A time limited and project-specific informal twinning arrangement with Sylhet built on an Economic and Twinning Accord came to an end in 2002.
7. In 2005 there was a petition in the borough proposing twinning with Jenin. In addition both Offenbach and Puteaux approached the council to reactivate former twinning links. At Full Council in December 2005 the suggestion of twinning with Jenin and Sylhet was raised. Full Council resolved to take seriously its commitment to developing international links but to do in accordance with best practice.
8. That following this considerable interest in the Council twinning with other cities/suburbs/municipalities, a motion was passed in 2005 instructing the commissioning of research into twinning best practice. This research was completed in 2007 and recommended time and project-specific links as and when they provide value to the authority's work. It looked to the then future London Olympic Games as an opportunity to provide further international links.

9. In the seven years since this research was completed the relationship between Tower Hamlets and Jenin has continued to grow and informal friendship links are now firmly established, providing a connection between the borough and this unique and extraordinary part of the world. Different organisations in Tower Hamlets, including the Council, have hosted school children, musicians, civic leaders, community and cultural workers from Jenin. Tower Hamlets residents in turn have visited the Governorate to volunteer in the refugee camp, run training courses, and to learn what life in Palestine is like.
10. In line with the twinning best practice framework set out by the LGIB, the now defunct arm of the LGA, exploratory visits have taken place. The Governor of Jenin and the province's International Officer visited the borough in 2012 and met with councillors, community workers and trade union officials. An eclectic Tower Hamlets group of delegates similarly composed visited the Governorate in August 2013 and travelled widely across the province.
11. Twinning relationships need not be dependent on public funds to give them active expression. This can be demonstrated by the friendship activities that have taken place with Jenin over the last decade. Some UK towns that are twinned have opted for community based twinning associations which engage in fundraising and sponsorship activities in order to support exchanges and twinning events.
12. A number of UK cities and boroughs have active twinning relationships with towns in the West Bank. For example Glasgow is twinned with Bethlehem, Dundee with Nablus, Hounslow with Ramallah and Camden with Abu Dis.

The Council resolves

1. To thank Governor Dwikat and Mayor Abu Mwais for their invitation to twin and for the hospitality shown to the delegation from Tower Hamlets that visited in August.
2. To acknowledge the benefits that the friendship links to date have brought the borough and recognise the further opportunities for Tower Hamlets that would result should a formal twinning with Jenin be established, such as: the sharing of expertise and experiences; inter-organisational working; community development, and the enhancement of the education and personal development of young people.
3. To accept the invitation to twin with the Governate of Jenin and begin drawing up a Charter agreement setting out the rationale, nature of the link and the goals of the twinning, so to reflect the interests and aspirations of both communities to proceed through the formal Council decision making process with the twinning becoming active on signing at a formal twinning ceremony.
4. That while the act of twinning with Jenin represents a statement of support towards those living in the province, it also symbolises an expression of hope that one day all the people in this part of the Middle East, whether they be Muslim, Jewish, Christian or of no faith may live together peacefully.

12.15 Motion regarding Protecting Community Pubs

Proposer: Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs

Seconder: Councillor Denise Jones

This Council notes:

- That in addition to the provision of its own services the Council should support through its policies and the exercise of its powers a network of well-run community facilities, including shops, pubs, advice centres, places of worship and other local forums and services which are valued by residents. As an example of these, community pubs provide a valuable community service for those who choose to use them.
- Twenty-six pubs close every week across the country. In Tower Hamlets many pubs have already been converted to flats or stand empty.
- Recently local pubs such as The Sun in Bethnal Green and the Britannia pub in Mile End have closed down, to the disappointment of local residents.
- Pubs inject an average of £80,000 into their local economy each year and support almost one million UK jobs, 46% of whom are 16 – 24 year olds.
- That whilst some pubs can have anti-social behaviour problems which the Council should challenge, the majority offer a positive contribution to our borough and are part of a balanced and inclusive community offering that helps to define the local quality of life.

This Council further notes:

- The recently adopted Managing Development Document policy DM8 specifies that social and community facilities, such as public houses, will be protected where they meet an identified local need and the buildings are suitable for their use.
- That while conversion of pubs to residential use would be resisted as contrary to planning policy, this does not automatically mean such applications would be rejected.
- Residents often feel they have no opportunity to prevent their local pubs from being sold off or converted to flats.
- The demolition of pubs is classed as “permitted development” means planning permission is not required. Between 2003 and 2012, 414 former pubs were demolished in London alone.

This Council believes:

- Local pubs are a hugely important community hub, bringing local people together and providing social inclusion opportunities.
- While pubs that cause antisocial behaviour should be subject to enforcement action, well managed community pubs should be protected by the Council.

This Council resolves:

- To work with residents to list local pubs as Assets of Community Value under the Localism Act, giving greater protection against pubs being sold off to developers.
- To support the Sustainable Communities Act proposal: “That the Secretary of State help protect community pubs in England by ensuring that planning permission and community consultation are required before community pubs are allowed to be converted to betting shops, supermarkets and pay-day loan stores or other uses, or are allowed to be demolished.”
- To work together with Local Works and the Campaign for Real Ale to gain support for the proposal from other councils in the region and across the country.

12.16 Motion regarding Zero Hours Contracts

Proposer: Councillor Kabir Ahmed

Seconder: Councillor Shafiqul Haque

This Council notes:

- There are an estimated 1 million workers in Britain employed on zero-hour contracts.
- Approximately 247 employees are employed in the Council on zero-hour contracts working an average 4.5 hours per week.
- For the year 2013/14 to date, 120 agency staff on zero hour contract staff have carried out work for the Council working an average of 5 ¼ hours per week. While a minority of workers on zero hour contracts welcome the flexibility they offer, some employers use zero hour contracts that include an obligation for workers to take whatever shifts offered are to them removing all flexibility from the worker.
- This obligation means workers face considerable insecurity, reduced employment rights, family pressures and depressed income as a consequence.
- The Council does not use zero hour contracts where staff are obliged to take whatever shifts are offered.
- Nevertheless the Mayor is committed to phasing out zero hours contracts. When the youth service was de-privatised the Council showed this commitment to phase out zero hours contracts by putting all the staff brought back in-house who were on zero hours contracts onto full or part time equivalents.

This Council resolves:

- To reaffirm our commitment to phase out all zero-hour contracts in the Council.
- To work towards phasing out the use of zero-hour contracts amongst Council contractors.

12.17 Motion regarding Immigration Bill

Proposer: Councillor Gulam Robbani

Secunder: Councillor Abdul Asad

This Council notes:

- The government's new immigration bill is designed, in the words of Theresa May, to create a "hostile environment for illegal migrants."
- Some of the elements of the Bill include expediting deportation measures, limiting appeals on applications, restricting undocumented immigrants from a variety of services including opening a bank account, renting accommodation, obtaining a driver's license, and accessing the NHS without paying for it.
- Leading lawyers, landlords, immigration welfare charities and housing organisations have warned that the bill will lead to a real risk of increased homelessness, including of families, and widespread discrimination.
- The Government has not conducted an equalities impact assessment survey on the effect of the Bill's restrictions on accessing NHS services.
- That neither Jim Fitzpatrick nor Rushanara Ali opposed the bill at its second reading.

This Council believes:

- Like the racist vans and "go home" text messages piloted by the Tories, the Immigration Bill is a cynically motivated policy designed to attract the anti-immigrant voters.
- The Bill will drive some of the most vulnerable people in our society into further poverty, destitution and exploitation, left with nowhere to go except for rogue landlords, money lenders and backstreet doctors.
- The Bill will result in racial profiling and discrimination and give bigoted landlords free rein to discriminate.
- The Bill will increase exploitation in the workplace. Employers will use these proposals as an excuse for not employing anyone who looks or sounds 'different', on the grounds that they could be fined. Black, Asian and ethnic minority workers, who are already hit hardest by unemployment, will be even less likely to obtain a job.
- Overseas visitors make up only 0.01% of NHS budget and government claims of "health tourism" overstressing services have been rubbished by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- The proposals put forward by the Government in this Bill could end up costing the tax payer a lot more as timely treatment keeps people out of hospital, stop the spread of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, save lives and health service money.

- The Government's decision not to conduct an equalities impact assessment survey puts at risk many residents in Tower Hamlets.

This Council resolves:

- To affiliate to the campaign opposing the Bill initiated by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI).
- To lobby our local MP's to oppose the Bill.
- To endorse the Mayor's decision to support a judicial review of the Bill.

12.18 Motion regarding Recorded Votes

Proposer: Councillor Alibor Choudhury

Seconded: Councillor Kabir 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 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:

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