

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2014**

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

**SUMMARY**

1. Eleven motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 Lutfur Rahman's legacy of failure

**Proposer: Councillor Sirajul Islam**

**Seconded: Councillor Rachael Saunders**

This Council notes:

- That under Lutfur Rahman's leadership:

### *Jobs*

- The number of people long-term unemployed in the borough has risen 23%
- The number of young people aged 18-24 who are long-term unemployed in the borough has more than doubled. (Up 111%)
- During the Olympics there was little discernable impact in terms of the number of young people employed in the borough.

### *Cleaner Streets*

- Residents have reported 24,000 bins as uncollected.
- The introduction of charges for bulk waste collections led to 7,000 fewer bulk collections.
- Street cleaning was cut to only two days a week

### *Crime and ASB*

- Crime is up 1.4% since Lutfur Rahman came to power.
- Over the same period crime in neighbouring in Newham is down 8% and in Barking and Dagenham it is down 10%.
- 20,000 reports of Anti-Social behaviour last year
- Tower Hamlets has the second highest levels of anti-social behaviour in London.
- 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.

### *Housing*

- Lutfur Rahman has actually SOLD more Council homes than he has built
  - o 15 built since Lutfur Rahman came to power
  - o 46 homes sold off under right to buy
  - o 14 homes sold off through Lutfur Rahman's asset stripping
- There are over 20,000 families on the borough's housing waiting list
- Plans were drawn up to ship up to 500 families out of London this year.
- 94 vulnerable families have unlawfully been placed in 'temporary' accommodation for more than 6 weeks.
- Only 27 of almost 700 homes on the Olympic Park were allocated to Tower Hamlets families

### *Cost of Living*

- 14,000 families have been hit by the Government's Benefit Cap.

- Lutfur Rahman cut the borough's stretched advice centres to the bone with cuts in their grants of up to 50%
- The cost of privately renting in Tower Hamlets now takes up 60% of the average household income.

### *Schools*

- 30% of secondary school children missed out on their first preference school last year. 157 children didn't get any of their 6 preferences.
- The provision of school places varies significantly between areas. For example in Limehouse, last year only 54% of students got a first preference Secondary School place.
- The school place crisis has been ignored.

### *Council Finance*

- The Council has made no progress on invest to save strategies.
- The Council has developed a budget gap of £80m in coming years.
- Over £18m has been spent on redundancy payments with countless more on out of court 'settlements'

### *Waste*

- £42,000 a year wasted on a vanity chauffeur driven Mercedes
- £296,000 a year wasted on 'mayoral advisors'
- Hundreds of thousands wasted on unnecessary publicity

### *Contempt*

- Residents have had their questions, petitions and expectations ignored.
- Councillors were removed from community organisations with their seats left vacant.
- A Commonwealth minister was banned from visiting the Town Hall during the Olympics

### *This Council Believes:*

- Tower Hamlets is a great place to live and can do so much better than this.
- People feel totally let down by Lutfur Rahman's out of touch, divisive and secretive administration and that a change is needed.
- That the current Mayor is too weak to face up to the real challenges facing this council and the people who live in our borough.
- That John Biggs is the man to make that change.

### *This Council resolves:*

- To condemn Lutfur Rahman for his four years of failure.

## **12.2 Motion regarding enforcement against spitting**

**Proposer: Councillor Gloria Thienel**

**Seconded: Councillor Dr Emma Jones**

This Council notes:

- That Enfield Council has led the way in dealing with spitting by introducing a by-law against it
- That Waltham Forest Council has avoided the cumbersome bureaucracy of introducing a by-law by classifying spit as a form of “waste”
- That magistrates have upheld the view of Waltham Forest that spit can be classified along with litter; and that therefore those who spit can be issued fixed penalty notices for littering
- The increasing number of complaints received by local councillors in Tower Hamlets that spitting and urinating in public are an issue in our borough
- That Weaver’s ward councillors and our local assembly member have launched a petition for pop-up toilets in Brick Lane, due to people urinating on doorsteps

This Council believes:

- That there are no circumstances under which unsanitary and antisocial behaviour such as spitting or urinating in public is acceptable
- That the majority of the public living, working and visiting Tower Hamlets would support banning such disgusting actions
- That the council should follow Waltham Forest’s lead by dealing with this issue immediately

This Council resolves:

- To classify spit and urine as “waste” for the purposes of being able to treat them like litter
- To ask the council’s enforcement officers to take action against people for this behaviour going forward

### **12.3 Motion regarding supporting building of the Columbia Market War Memorial**

**Proposer: Councillor John Pierce**

**Secunder: Councillor M.A. Mukit M.B.E.**

This Council Notes:

On the first night of the Blitz, 7th September 1940 a German bomb entered the ventilation shaft of the air raid shelter situated under the Great Hall of Columbia Market which had a glass roof which caused mass devastation and killed at least 51 people.

This Council believes:

This tragedy should be commemorated and a fitting memorial should be erected near the site of the Great Hall to remember the 51 people who lost their lives in this tragedy.

This Council Resolves:

Calls on the Council to commemorate the air raid on Columbia Market, Columbia Road, and to support the Columbia Market War Memorial Group with building of the Columbia Market War Memorial.

## **12.4 Motion regarding the economy**

**Proposer: Councillor David Snowdon**

**Seconder: Councillor Tim Archer**

This Council notes:

- The 1.5 million new apprenticeships created since 2010
- The introduction of a benefits cap, which ensures that work always pays for the residents of Tower Hamlets
- That there are 1.3 million people in work than in 2010, in over 1 million new full-time jobs
- That thanks to cuts in income tax rates, low-earners take-home pay is up over £500 per year
- That Help to Buy is helping Tower Hamlets families to take their first step onto the Housing ladder
- That the Conservatives are the only party who can deliver an EU referendum

This Council believes:

- That residents in Tower Hamlets would prefer politicians who were prepared to Share the Facts with them, rather than scaremongering and mud slinging
- That the economy will continue to grow over the coming months and years

This Council resolves:

- To write to David Cameron and George Osborne, thanking them for their good stewardships of the nation
- To encourage all candidates in the forthcoming elections to Share the Facts

## **12.5 Motion regarding Standing Up for Tower Hamlets**

**Proposer: Councillor Rania Khan**

**Seconder: Councillor Rabina Khan**

This Council Notes:

That on 14 March a local magazine published an interview with the Mayor of Newham, Robin Wales, in which he criticised this council's policy on events funding, claimed it favoured particular religious groups and compared the results to Apartheid South Africa.

That the events funded by this council have in fact been for the elderly and the disabled and not for religious groups.

This Council Believes:

That Wales's remarks are a disgraceful slur on this multicultural borough and that he should be ashamed of himself for stirring up community tensions.

That Wales's remarks are deeply insensitive to those who suffered under South African apartheid.

That Tower Hamlets' strengths lie in our diverse yet cohesive community spirit, and that we all benefit from shared experiences from those with different backgrounds.

That Wales has enough work to be getting on with in Newham, with poor families being shipped out of London as far as Birmingham and Hastings because he has failed to deliver sufficient social housing provision, and educational attainment levels below national average and in decline.

This Council Resolves:

To instruct the Head of Paid Service to write to Newham Council, expressing in the strongest terms this Council's displeasure at the Newham mayor's repeated attacks on and insults to our borough.

## 12.6 Motion regarding Celebration Events

**Proposer: Councillor Alibor Choudhury**

**Secunder: Councillor Abdul Asad**

The Council notes:

That the Mayor and Council have hosted the following successful events:

- the Tea Dance for older residents, at which over 500 residents attended;
- the Carers' Party, at which over 350 residents attended;
- and the Disability event, at which over 200 residents confirmed attendance;

Each of these events was designed to celebrate the achievements and contributions made to Tower Hamlets, by these groups of residents.

The older residents' event was designed to thank older residents for their contribution to the borough.

The Carers' event celebrated the dedication and high levels of care provided by friends and relatives in the borough. Tower Hamlets 21, 000 carers who deliver unpaid care to people. The care provided is usually over 50 hours a week, more than anywhere else in the Country.

The Disability event celebrated the wider range of achievements made by disabled residents in the borough.

In the budget meeting in February 2013, the Labour Group passed an amendment which reduced the funding for these events by £111,000.

The Mayor chose to reinstate the budget for these events to ensure that they could be delivered.

The Council believes:

That these events are an important way of showing our appreciation to different groups in the borough.

That these events helped to build social capital, enabled residents to access more support and were highly enjoyable.

That these events were a great success, which was reflected in the praise and thanks given by attendees.

The Council resolves:

To commend the Mayor for hosting these successful events.

To support the Mayor and partners involved in the events to continue to work with these groups to provide support, celebrate achievements and commemorate contributions made.



## 12.7 Motion regarding supporting women into work

**Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan**

**Secunder: Councillor Lutfa Begum**

The Council notes:

- The Conservative-led government has made millions of cuts to core services. Between 2010 and 2012 they made almost £15 billion worth of cuts; according to Fawcett Society/House of Commons Library, 74% of these cuts were made to services women use.
- In Tower Hamlets, there are 45,000 women who are not working in the borough and 3,750 of the women are claiming job seekers allowance.
- The Council's Women and Worklessness research highlighted that one of the barriers to women working is a lack of flexible employment opportunities which can fit around caring responsibilities.
- The Mayor has created two innovative specialist projects to help women into work:-
  - The £1.2 million Women into Health Jobs Programme will create more than 100 part time training and employment opportunities for women from the borough in the health sector.
  - The Work 100 project was a targeted intervention to help women, particularly Bangladeshi and Somalian women, who find it difficult to enter the job market. Skillsmatch and Skills for Life worked with these women to develop a supported work plan to enable them to access training or employment.
- There were four recruitment events held between 3rd Feb and 11th March 2014, attended by over 115 women.
- Women in the community and women's groups worked together to recruit the attendees and encourage participation.
- In the budget meeting on 26th Feb 2014 the Labour Group proposed to remove funding for the Women into Health Jobs programme.

The Council believes

- That Conservative-led government have no targeted strategy to help women get back into work.
- The Mayor's projects provide paid training and employment for women who face difficulties entering the job market because they have been out of work for a long time, possibly due to caring responsibilities.
- The local Labour Party's proposed amendment to scrap the Women into Work Project illustrates that they are not addressing the issues that affect women and families the most.

The Council resolves:

- To support the Mayor's innovative projects to help more women into employment.
- To lobby Central Government to increase provision to help women into work.

## **12.8 Motion regarding a Public Inquiry into police spying abuses**

**Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman**

**Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

### **1. This Council Notes:**

The decision of the Home Secretary to hold a public inquiry into the use of police spies.

The claims of Doreen Lawrence that police failings go to the 'highest levels' and that these failings are indicative of what Lord Macpherson described as 'institutional racism'.

### **2. This Council Believes**

The revelations that police officers who were supposedly investigating the murder of Stephen Lawrence were actually spying on his grieving family are deeply concerning.

### **3. This Council Resolves**

To congratulate Doreen Lawrence for her bravery and determination in challenging and rooting out racism in our public bodies.

## **12.9 Motion regarding Brick Lane Improvements**

**Proposer: Councillor Gulam Robbani**

**Secunder: Councillor Shafiqul Haque**

This Council notes:

That despite the cuts and hostile economic climate, Mayor Lutfur Rahman has put forward a range of proposals to boost local businesses including:

A curry competition on 23<sup>rd</sup> March judged by celebrity chef Ainsley Harriot to promote Brick Lane as London's Curry Capital.

A £355,000 investment in high streets and markets to help traders and small businesses.

An investment of £2.5m to regenerate Whitechapel Market

The Start Small, Think Big programme launched at the Whitechapel Ideas Store on 26th Feb to help local entrepreneurs develop business and social media strategies.

This Council further notes:

That claims by the Labour Party and GLA member John Biggs that a curfew has been imposed on Brick Lane restaurants have been proven false, but not before causing lasting damage to the reputation of Brick Lane and its world-class restaurants.

This Council believes:

That investment in our town centres is vital to the borough's economic recovery.

That playing politics with the livelihoods of Brick Lane restaurateurs by spreading false rumours is irresponsible and damages the reputation of the area and the prospects for local businesses

This Council resolves:

To review existing plans for Brick Lane and other commercial hubs to ensure that local business are getting the maximum support in these tough times.

## **12.10 Motion on Tony Benn**

**Proposer: Councillor Ohid Ahmed**

**Secunder: Councillor Shahed Ali**

This Council Notes:

The death of Tony Benn on Friday 14 March.

That Tony Benn first entered Parliament in 1950 and finally retired from the House of Commons in 2001, 'to devote more time to politics'.

That less than a year ago, Tony visited Wapping in Tower Hamlets to join Councillor Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture in unveiling a plaque to Thomas Rainsborough.

This Council Believes:

That Tony Benn was a lifelong campaigner for the voiceless, who stood for justice, equality and peace.

That Tony Benn was right in his belief that the best path to social justice, and to socialism, was through parliamentary democracy - and it is incumbent on those inspired him to take on this mantle.

That he spoke out on colonialism in the 1950s, and after his ministerial career was long behind him became the figure head of the anti-war movement, most notably campaigning against the illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003.

That his belief in international solidarity reflected, as elsewhere, in his trenchant support for the Palestinian struggle, was unstinting.

That in his passing, the poor, the vulnerable, the working class, ethnic minorities, and all oppressed groups have lost a valiant champion.

This Council Resolves:

To call on the Executive to swiftly put in place arrangements for a fitting local tribute to his memory.

## **12.11 Motion regarding Recorded Votes**

**Proposer: Councillor Kabir Ahmed**

**Seconder: Councillor Alibor Choudhury**

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.