

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2015**

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

**SUMMARY**

1. Thirteen motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015.
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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 March for Homes

**Proposer:** Councillor Abjol Miah

**Seconder:** Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaquim

This Council notes

- That the March for Homes will take place on Saturday January 31<sup>st</sup>, to campaign for genuinely affordable, secure housing for Londoners
- That the march will have an east London wing supported by campaign groups in Tower Hamlets
- The work of the Mayor and Council leadership in creating new social and affordable housing, resulting in our securing of a £25m New Homes Bonus, including Mayoral commitment to build thousands of new homes
- The work of the Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission in helping set our agenda on the cost of living, for both policy-making and lobbying
- That a majority of both Londoners and Britons now support controlling rents

This Council believes

- That the March for Homes should be supported as a grassroots initiative involving resident-led campaigns and the labour movement
- That the scale of London's housing crisis is shameful, and being contributed to by the divisive and ill-considered policies of the current government

This Council resolves

- To encourage councillors to sign the March for Homes open letter, and attend the demonstration if they are able
- To lend our official support to the March for Homes
- To reaffirm our belief in the principle of genuinely affordable, secure and socialised housing for all, and to continue to campaign for this.

## **12.2 Motion regarding Docklands Sailing Centre**

**Proposer: Councillor Dave Chesterton**

**Seconded: Councillor Andrew Wood**

This Council Notes:

1. The developers of the Westferry Printers site are currently going through pre-application public consultations.
2. The Sailing Centre is concerned about the potential effect development alongside the Millwall Dock may have on the wind and the detrimental impact this may have on sailing and other watersports.
3. The Sailing Centre has made a number of representations to the developers; so far the Sailing Centre's concerns have been largely ignored.
4. The Sailing Centre is the borough's premier watersports centre and among the largest public open space in Tower Hamlets. Pressures on public infrastructure as a result of population increases arising from new developments are well understood. The Council must protect its public open spaces for use by current and future generations.

This Council Believes:

1. Pressures on public infrastructure as a result of population increases arising from new developments are well understood.
2. The Council must protect its public open spaces for use by current and future generations.
3. Council should continue to recognise the importance of the Docklands Sailing Centre in enabling use of one of the largest areas of open space in Tower Hamlets by the whole community for sport and recreation, with unique opportunities for education and employment.

This Council resolves:

1. To protect the Docklands Sailing Centre from the consequences of property development which may prevent the continued use of the Millwall Docks for those uses and the charitable purposes of the Docklands Sailing Centre Trust.
2. To exercise its powers as local planning authority, to ensure any development on the West Ferry Printers site does not cause any detriment to sailing and use of the Millwall Docks from Docklands Sailing Centre.

### **12.3 Motion regarding solidarity with French citizens**

**Proposer: Councillor Chris Chapman**

**Secunder: Councillor Julia Dockerill**

In this year of Magna Carta, original copies of which were circulated throughout the Country in Anglo Norman French, The Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets reaffirms the principles of freedom of speech, which have been hard won over successive centuries and condemns the atrocities in France this month.

This Council notes that London is the sixth largest French City in the world and that we support the loss shared by our French neighbours in this Borough, City and those just twenty one miles across the Channel.

The wickedness of those who brutally murdered journalists and police officers will not divide the people of Europe, who have fought for the basic freedoms of speech and assembly, regardless of our different nationalities.

This Council resolves that the Speaker of Tower Hamlets writes to Her Excellency Madame Sylvie Bermann, Ambassador of the Republic of France to show our solidarity with our French fellow citizens over this tragedy.

## 12.4 Motion regarding Tory Cuts and Tower Hamlets

**Proposer:** Councillor Mahbub Alam

**Seconder:** Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah

This Council notes

- That local government as a whole has been hit with a further average 1.8% budget cut, and that council leaders (notably Newcastle's) fear being unable to provide statutory services under the current climate
- That the poorest boroughs have been targeted by Eric Pickles and the DCLG - Tower Hamlets has to deal with a cut of over 5%, far higher than the average, in spite of having severe levels of deprivation
- That in spite of £10bn having already been cut from local authority budgets in the last three years and a further £10bn worth of cuts having been announced.
- Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, Manchester, Rochdale, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Doncaster and South Tyneside are among the 36 local authorities that take the maximum cut of 8.9%. Meanwhile Dorset gets a 0.25% increase in funding and Windsor and Maidenhead, Poole, West Sussex, Wokingham, Richmond upon Thames and Buckinghamshire all get cuts of 1% or below. (see Local Authority Budget cuts graph below for details)

This Council believes

- That the wanton slashing of public services is dangerous, damaging and indefensible. In a time of heavy underemployment, unemployment and soaring living costs, council services are a vital lifeline for vulnerable residents.
- That funding public services is economically and socially beneficial as well as ethically just; as councillors we have seen the immeasurable contribution made by council-funded projects and community organisations have made to the lives of our residents.
- That the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition deserve condemnation for their attacks on local government budgets, and Labour deserve to be taken to task for their often lacklustre performance on opposing austerity.

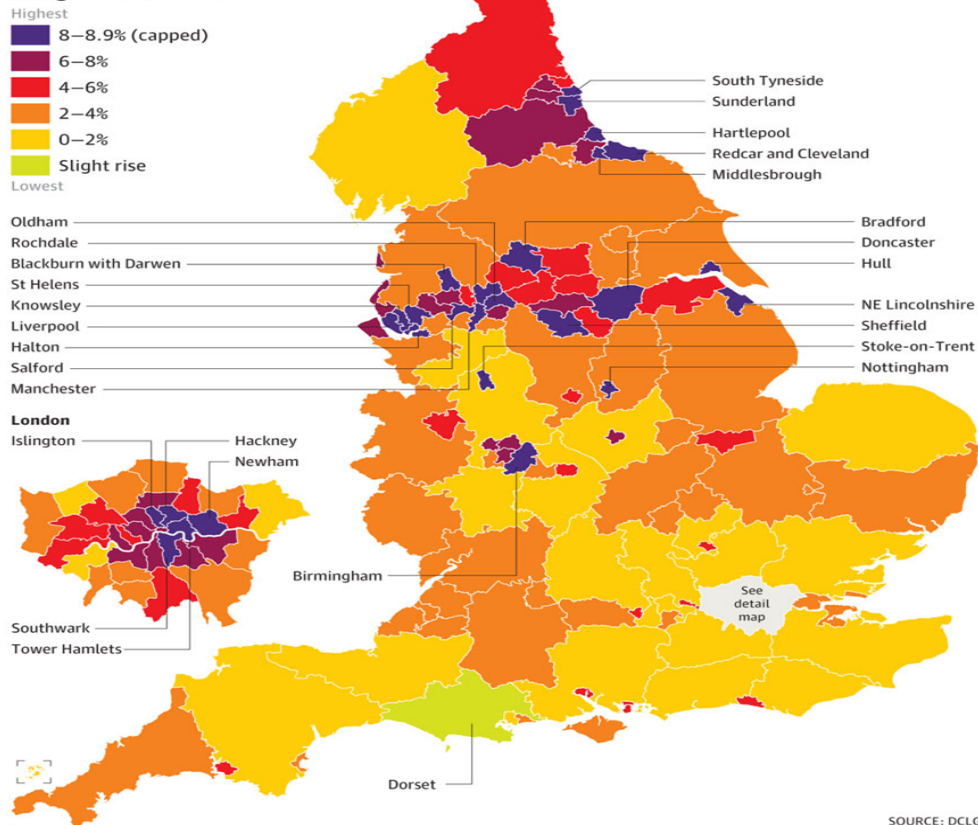
This Council resolves

- To write letters to Secretary of State Eric Pickles, Local Government Minister Kris Hopkins and Shadow Secretary of State Hilary Benn expressing our grave concern at the scale of local government cuts and advocating a strategy of investing in local public services.
- To support the People's Assembly Against Austerity in its call to connect and mobilise councils that want to fight as part of a grassroots movement.

- To oppose all cuts to our communities, and when faced with cuts make our opposition clear whilst implementing them in a way that safeguard residents to the greatest possible extent.

## Local authority budget cuts

### Reductions in local authority budgets for 2011-12



## 12.5 Motion regarding Officer Response to PwC Council Motion

**Proposer:** Councillor Rachael Saunders

**Seconder:** Councillor Shiria Khatun

This Council Notes:

1. The response from Officers to the Labour Group's Full Council motion (26<sup>th</sup> November 2014)
2. The lack of response from the Mayor to the Labour Group motion.

This Council Resolves:

To refer the PwC report to the Standards Advisory Committee and to the Human Resources Committee.

## **12.6 Motion regarding Record Awards for Tower Hamlets Council**

**Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds**

**Secunder: Councillor Craig Aston**

This Council notes that following on from the question at the last meeting by Cllr Mahbub Alam, regarding awards won by the Council, the Tower Hamlets First administration has secured a record four awards in the Private Eye Rotten Boroughs Awards for 2014.

These are:

- The Environment award to Cllr Ohid Ahmed; for ensuring that his own street is visited twice a day by the borough's poop-scooper
- The Bigot of the Year award to Cllr Alibor Choudhury
- The Quote of the Year award to Mayor Lutfur Rahman himself for misunderstanding the PwC report
- The Heroic Failure Award to Tower Hamlets First's Aktaruz Zahman who in the space of six weeks contested two wards in Tower Hamlets, using two names and providing two different addresses whilst dropping from fourth place in St Peter's ward to ninth place in Blackwall and Cubitt Town ward.

The Council resolves to note these awards as a symbol of the failure of the Tower Hamlets First administration and the hope of a improvements in the future.

## **12.7 Motion regarding Bus Strike in Tower Hamlets**

**Proposer: Councillor Suluk Ahmed**

**Secunder: Councillor Gulam Kibriya Choudhury**

This Council notes

- The strike by Tower Transit bus workers at an East London depot at the end of December
- The planned 13 January strike by up to 27000 London bus workers
- The ongoing discussions relating to Londonwide bus strikes on part of the unions representing our drivers
- The disparity in pay rates between TfL bus drivers, ranging from £9.30 to £12.34 per hour

This Council believes

- That bus drivers should be paid equally and well for the vital job they do
- That whilst fare hikes are passed on to consumers, transport staff seem to see none of the benefits
- That industrial action in defence of fair pay is just and necessary
- That whilst disruption to public services is regrettable, in light of the intransigence of Tower Transit and subsequent breakdown in negotiations, workers have every right to take industrial action

This Council resolves

- To commend the Tower Transit workers for their stand at the end of 2014
- To support the industrial action on 13 January
- To support the efforts of Unite and other bus unions to secure a fair deal
- To support equal and decent pay for London bus workers



## **12.8 Motion regarding public access to information**

**Proposer: Councillor Joshua Peck**

**Seconder: Councillor Rachel Blake**

This Council notes:

1. That unlike planning applications, licensing applications are not put on the council's website and that residents have to go into a council office to see applications
2. That even when Councillors ask to see licensing applications it can be several days before they sent, reducing the time available for objections

This Council believes:

That all licensing applications should be fully available on the Council website as soon as they are advertised

This Council further notes:

That when a resident reports a potential planning breach they will receive a letter confirming that a planning enforcement case has been opened but that they won't then receive any other communication from the Council until the case is closed, which may be many months later, leaving the resident with no information about the progress of their case until then.

This Council further believes:

1. That residents have a justifiable expectation of being kept better informed by the Council about planning enforcement cases they have raised.
2. That a letter at key points in the enforcement process (i.e. after the initial visit of planning officers, after the expiry of any date given to allow resolution of the breach, after any deadline for enforcement action etc) would enable residents to know what was happening.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Mayor to ensure that, within three months of this motion being passed, all licensing applications are published on the Council website at the same time they are put out to consultation
2. To call on the Mayor to ensure that, within three months of this motion being passed, planning enforcement start to update residents at key points in planning enforcement cases
3. That the relevant Corporate Directors bring reports on these issues to the next Council meeting.

## **12.9 Motion regarding Education spending**

**Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood**

**Secunder: Councillor Peter Golds**

This Council condemns Labour's proposed reduction in education spending in Tower Hamlets if Labour were to form the next government, as outlined by Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Dr The Hon Tristram Julian William Hunt and reported in the January 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Norwich Evening News*.

This Council further notes the comments of Dr The Hon Tristram Julian William Hunt, specially targeting Tower Hamlets pupils, as he stated, "It is no longer equitable that a child in Tower Hamlets will be getting roughly double the funding of a child in Hastings and yet the results in Tower Hamlets may be better in Hastings".

This Council believes that were a policy like this to be enacted it would have extremely detrimental effects on the standards of education in our borough and damage the future prospects for our young people, for which the Labour party should be condemned.

This Council further notes that under the coalition government education spending has been protected, standards have risen and £18 billion has been invested in a new schools building programme, delivering state of the art facilities to young people. In government Labour let standards slip, and owing to this disastrous policy Dr The Hon Tristram Julian William Hunt, has let the cat out of the bag by proposing to cut the amount of money spent on young people in this borough, as well as residents in Tower Hamlets and London having to pay for Labour's panic stricken attempts to buy off the Scottish National Party voters with their proposed London Tax.

## **12.10 Motion regarding the NHS**

**Proposer: Councillor Mohammed Maium Miah**

**Seconder: Councillor Shah Alam**

This Council notes

- That in the week prior to Christmas NHS A&E units recorded their worst performance ever
- That Unison has claimed the NHS is 'on the brink of a disaster'
- That the Government's NHS 'reforms' have been slammed not only by opposition parties but a range of independent groups and the majority of healthcare staff

This Council believes

- That cuts and stealth privatisation are having an immediate and lethal effect upon the capacity of our NHS
- Rising demand and reducing budgets are creating impacts across the health system
- That the Government with its closure of surgeries, slashing of staff pay and relentless marketisation have thoroughly broken its promise to 'cut the deficit, not the NHS'
- That effective, well-funded healthcare free at the point of use is a human right

This Council resolves

- To support community campaigns for the NHS, such as Keep Our NHS Public, the National Health Action party and 999 Call for the NHS
- To reiterate our call for a reversal of both Tory cuts and privatisation and Labour development of the internal market and profit motive in public health
- To commend Unison in their work for a better health service and fair pay and conditions for healthcare workers

## **12.11 Motion regarding New Schools**

**Proposer: Councillor Danny Hassell**

**Seconder: Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs**

This Council notes:

1. The increasing number of school providers in the borough, with increasing number of free schools and academies.
2. A recent survey by London Councils which showed 68% of parents believe local authorities should have powers to intervene in Free Schools and that 81% support council influence over school places.
3. The urgent need for additional primary and secondary schools places within the borough, especially in the East of the borough.
4. A number of site allocations have been identified across the borough for additional primary and secondary school provision.

This Council believes:

1. The decision of the Conservative-led Government to restrict the opening of new community schools by local authorities is an example of wider attacks on the role of local councils, who are often best place to make decisions about services for their local communities.
2. That this policy has made it more difficult to address issues such as a shortage of school places both nationally and locally.
3. Academies and Free Schools often lack local accountability, particularly in comparison to community schools and that parents support a role for councils in relation to performance of Free Schools and Academies.
4. Schools should reflect the communities that they serve and that schools with diverse and representative student populations will offer greater opportunities for young people.
5. Collaboration rather than competition should be at the heart of a local education system. All new schools in the borough should be part of the wider family of schools, committed to improving education in the borough as well as the wider wellbeing of the local community.
6. Any free schools must therefore demonstrate that they benefit all local children, regardless of income, background or ability, and have a positive impact on the wider local community.

This Council resolves:

1. To work with parents, teachers and other non-profit groups to ensure any Government approved free schools in Tower Hamlets are part of the family of

schools, promote inclusive, non-selective, comprehensive and high quality education for all children, and abide by the local authority admissions code.

2. To call on officers to work with developers bringing forward schemes which include education floor space at an early stage to ensure that the provision is for a local authority school where possible (for example through the use of satellite schools where appropriate).
3. To request officers investigate the admissions policies and processes of all schools in the borough and report on the profiles of the student populations at different schools.
4. To establish a standing scrutiny committee for education and schools standards, similar to the Health Scrutiny Panel.

## **12.12 Motion regarding homelessness in Tower Hamlets**

**Proposer: Councillor Marc Francis**

**Seconder: Councillor Sirajul Islam**

This Council notes:

1. Under Labour's Leadership after 1994, the London borough of Tower Hamlets had a strong track record of supporting homeless households, from bringing those placed outside the borough by the Lib Dem administration to back into Tower Hamlets to ending the long-term use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families with children ahead of schedule and halving the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010;
2. From 2002 onwards, LBTH in common with many other London boroughs increasingly offered homeless households a move into a home in the private rented sector on a voluntary basis to prevent their homelessness;
3. Since 2010, the Coalition Government's reduction in the subsidy levels for temporary accommodation and caps on Local Housing Allowance have seriously affected LBTH's ability to source such accommodation from private landlords in Tower Hamlets;
4. As a consequence, dozens of homeless families have been forced to stay in B&B longer than the six week legal limit, which is totally unsuitable for children, and others are now being placed in B&B "annexes", which while legal, are almost as bad;
5. More recently, the Mayor has allowed council officers to discharge the authority's duty to homeless households through the offer of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in the private rented sector, and that as of 30<sup>th</sup> June, this had happened to 50 households
6. The Homelessness Statement 2013-17 agreed by the Mayor and Cabinet notes that the Government had changed the law to allow such a discharge of duty, but does not make clear either that this is a power, not a duty, or that LBTH would be adopting such a policy
7. LBTH has published no criteria explaining the circumstances in which a homeless household will be made such an offer
8. LBTH's bid for additional funding of £270,000 from the Government's "Gold Standard" initiative to tackle the growing use of B&Bs was rejected by ministers, while other Conservative-led authorities facing much less housing pressure were awarded funding.

This Council believes:

1. Homeless families are potentially vulnerable and should not be forced to accept the offer of a tenancy in the private rented sector, which lacks security of tenure and which is often at rent levels that can only be afforded with Housing Benefit, creating a "poverty trap";

2. This policy was introduced by the Conservative Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government and Housing Minister in response to lobbying by Conservative-led Westminster City Council and other Tory boroughs, who have long argued against the legal safety net for homeless people;
3. Statutorily homeless families in Tower Hamlets should not have their rights eroded
4. The Coalition Government's reasons for denying LBTH funding from the "Gold Standard" scheme to help reduce the use of B&B were spurious.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Mayor to revoke the authorisation for council officers to discharge this authority's duty to homeless households through the offer of a private sector tenancy;
2. To call on the Mayor and our local Members of Parliament to make representations to the Department for Communities & Local Government for an investigation into the process by which local authorities were awarded "Gold Standard" funding;
3. To call on the Mayor to participate actively in London Councils' efforts to persuade this and any future Government to restore full Housing Benefit subsidy for homeless households in temporary accommodation and to agree a protocol for co-operation rather than competition between authorities over the lease of such accommodation;
4. To call on the Mayor to take further steps to comply with the legal requirement that for homeless families are not forced to stay in B&Bs longer than six week and also reduced the use of B&B "annexes", and to report back to Full Council on progress by April 2015.

## **12.13 Motion regarding tax dodging**

**Proposer: Councillor Clare Harrisson**

**Seconder: Councillor John Pierce**

The Council notes:

1. It has been estimated that the UK Treasury loses as much as £12 billion to tax dodging by multinational companies every year. Developing countries lose three times more to tax dodging than they receive in aid each year – enough to give a basic education to the 57 million children currently missing out.
2. The UK has a particular responsibility to end tax dodging, as it is responsible for 1 in 5 of the world's tax havens in the British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.
3. The use of tax havens by UK companies is rife, with 98 of the FTSE 100 companies routinely using tax havens.
4. Large multinational companies pay as little as 5% in corporate taxes globally while smaller businesses pay up to 30%.

This Council believes:

1. As a local authority we have a duty to provide the best possible public services
2. Our ability to provide quality local services would be significantly enhanced by the increased revenues from the Government tackling tax dodging.
3. All who benefit from public spending should contribute their fair share.
4. The UK must take a lead role in creating a fairer tax system and combating tax dodging.

This Council resolves:

1. To support the campaign for tax justice alongside organisations like Action Aid
2. To ask our MPs, Jim Fitzpatrick and Rushanara Ali to put pressure on the national Government and the treasury to take steps to end tax avoidance loopholes.