

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 15th APRIL 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 15th April 2015.
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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 ISIS/Tragic disappearance of local schoolgirls

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

Seconder: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Council notes

- The tragic disappearance of local schoolgirls who are assumed to have joined ISIS in Syria
- The ongoing threat of ISIS to all of us

Council believes

- That we continue to hope our young people are returned safely
- That safeguarding our young people is of paramount importance

Council resolves

- To extend all our sympathy and condolences to the families and friends of the missing girls during this extremely difficult period
- To reaffirm our commitment to resisting the politics of hatred and division in all its forms, and in this specific case, the vile ideology of ISIS
- To welcome the distribution of the council's counter-terrorism guide for parents at schools and places of worship, and to continue to develop this strategy based on effectiveness and resident feedback

12.2 Motion regarding a New Deal for Leaseholders

Proposer: Councillor John Pierce

Seconder: Councillor Rachel Blake

This Council notes:

1. The hard work done by MPs Rushanara Ali and Jim Fitzpatrick to support leaseholders in the borough
2. Leaseholders across Tower Hamlets have been sent bills by Tower Hamlets Homes for as much as £40,000 for major works as part of the Decent Homes Programme
3. Leaseholders have been given 12 months to repay these hefty and unmanageable bills
4. Leaseholders feel that Tower Hamlets Homes and Tower Hamlets Council have not adequately engaged, consulted or responded to their concerns

This Council believes that:

1. It is unacceptable for leaseholders to be hit with such extreme bills and under such a short repayment timescale
2. The repayment period for major works should be extended to 10 years
3. Greater transparency is necessary, particularly relating to all charges and proposed works
4. There needs to be an open and fair dialogue between leaseholders and Tower Hamlets Homes

This Council resolves to call on Tower Hamlets Homes and Tower Hamlets Council to:

1. Extend the current repayment period for major works from 12 months to 10 years
2. Provide much greater transparency on all charges and proposed major works
3. Adopt a pro-active approach when responding to, engaging with and consulting leaseholders

12.3 Motion regarding the Constitutional Working Group

Proposer: Councillor Craig Aston

Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds

This council notes that:

1. Since October 2010 the council has operated under an Executive Mayoral model in which most functions of the council are in the hands of the Executive Mayor
2. The size of the council was reduced from 51 to 45 in 2014, in part due to arguments about how the work of councillors and the structure of the council could be revised with fewer members.
3. Apart from necessary changes to the constitution to account for the transfer of executive powers, no thorough revision of the structures of the council was carried out, and no such revision has been carried out since.
4. Tower Hamlets is one of only 9 boroughs in London out of 32 with a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee as opposed to a number of scrutiny bodies.

This council notes further:

1. Although a formal scheme of delegation exists, executive powers have never been formally delegated. Responsibility for executive actions therefore rests exclusively with Lutfur Rahman.
2. Lutfur Rahman has not answered a single question at Full Council since 2012 and usually his only interaction with Full Council meetings is his 5-minute report, where he generally talks about matters irrelevant to his duties as Executive Mayor.
3. Lutfur Rahman has attended just 4 Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings since becoming Executive Mayor in 2010.

This council notes further:

1. The intervention of the Department for Communities and Local Government in sending the auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, to this council.
2. The subsequent report of PricewaterhouseCoopers, which made severe criticisms of the actions and lack of accountability of the administration.
3. The further intervention of DCLG in sending Commissioners into this borough to exercise certain executive powers.

This council believes that:

1. The structures left in place at the transfer to an Executive Mayoral model in 2010 are, and were, not sufficient to ensure genuine scrutiny and accountability of an Executive Mayoral administration.
2. Those structures have plainly failed, resulting in DCLG intervention.

3. A revision of those structures is both necessary and desirable.

The council resolves that:

1. The Constitutional Working Group be convened to consider revisions to the constitution which would strengthen scrutiny, oversight, and executive accountability.
2. The legal department provide all necessary assistance to the Constitutional Working Group.
3. That proposals for revisions to the constitution should be brought back to Full Council not later than 30 September 2015.

12.4 Motion regarding Tower Hamlets 50th Anniversary

Proposer: Councillor Abdul Asad

Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Council notes

- That 1st April 2015 marked the fiftieth anniversary of Tower Hamlets Council
- That several events have taken place in order to mark this occasion, including the launch of the '50 Years in Pictures' campaign
- That an exhibition of memories of the Borough will be displayed in June with a view to a potential tour of this exhibition across LBTH

Council believes

- That the endurance and progress of our community for half a century is an occasion worth celebrating
- That people of all backgrounds and walks of life from Tower Hamlets have contributed untold amounts to both their immediate community and the wider world
- That what unites us as a borough is stronger than any differences

Council resolves

- To support the continuing planned programme of events
- To encourage residents to engage actively in sharing their memories of the borough and hopes for its future
- To use the views gathered from resident participation in future discussions and policymaking around the shape this borough takes
- To encourage that residents whose work is displayed in the exhibition or mentioned by the Council receive appreciation letter
- To support the initiative of a dedicated anniversary webpage www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/50 which includes an interactive forum where people can contribute their own memories and thoughts about what makes our borough great, under the heading 'Your Tower Hamlets in 50 words' under the theme of '50 reasons why you love Tower Hamlets'
- To support a Summer photographic exhibition to celebrate all the fantastic photographs from people and from local historical archives, as well as, residents' own artistic representations of their views on the borough
- To encourage and develop the idea of 'Artwork for the Future' (photographic images; creative expressions of the borough through art forms such as poetry, digital art, painting, sculpture, dance, theatre; memories of the borough; and opinions about what makes our borough so special and that could be turned into a

piece of art) which will showcase Tower Hamlets' history, its story over the last fifty years and the residents and locations which have shaped it into the borough we know today

- To tap into the Arts Council England/BBC campaign [Get Creative](#) – which is trying to encourage people to take part in something creative every day

12.5 Motion regarding Barts Health NHS Trust

Proposer: Councillor Asma Begum

Seconder: Councillor Rachel Blake

This Council notes that:

1. Barts Health NHS Trust has been put into special measures, after a Care Quality Commission found a culture of bullying and low morale among staff at Whipps Cross Hospital
2. The coalition government scrapped Labour's guarantee of a GP appointment within 48 hours
3. The coalition government cut funding for Labour's GP extended opening hours scheme, and as a result fewer practices are open at evening and weekends
4. Over 20,000 signed the petition to 'Save our Surgeries' – calling on NHS England to reverse the withdrawal of the minimum practice income guarantee, which changed the funding formula and is taking money away from deprived areas
5. The Labour Group is fighting locally for local workers and to ensure that the best talent is available to the Trust

This Council believes that:

1. Labour's policy to guarantee that you can get a GP appointment within 48 hours is vital
2. Barts Health NHS Trust should employ more local workers, creating local jobs and using local skills
3. The Tories have wasted £3 billion on a top-down reorganisation which puts competition and profits before co-operation and patient care, and ties hospitals up in competition law
4. The unaffordability of housing is becoming a barrier to recruitment and retention of key NHS workers

This Council resolves to:

1. Call on Barts Health NHS Trust to use trust assets to enable the provision of affordable, local housing for local staff
2. Call on Barts Health to fully utilise the resource of local workers
3. Call on Barts Health to work with housing providers and the council to prioritise provision of local housing for key workers

12.6 Motion regarding the Borough's Leisure Facilities

Proposer: Councillor Julia Dockerill

Seconder: Councillor Andrew Wood

That this council recalls with pride the role this borough played in the success of the London 2012 Olympics, and the appetite residents demonstrated for wider community and sporting participation.

Notes with concern that the quality and upkeep of a number of sports facilities in the borough are not a fitting sporting legacy of the Olympics.

Further notes that a number of council sports premises are under-utilised and regret the lost opportunity this represents in providing first class leisure and community facilities to borough residents.

Further notes that the GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited), contract to provide borough leisure services is shortly due for renewal.

Calls for a candid assessment of GLL's performance in running that contract and further debate on how our borough leisure facilities are run and what opportunities are available to raise substantially the quality of provision.

12.7 Motion regarding Greek Solidarity Movement

Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Seconded: Councillor Mahbub Alam

This Council notes

- The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has the highest level of child poverty in the country and is being heavily hit by austerity.
- That austerity both across Europe and UK has failed to deliver significant growth in seven years.
- Austerity has had particularly devastating effects in Southern Europe. In Greece the number of unemployed increased from approximately 360,000 in 2008 to 1.4 million in 2013 and there has been an alarming increase in poverty. Unicef reported in 2014 that some 686,000 children, or 35.4% of the total, were at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
- The proposal from the new Syriza-led Greek government for a European Debt Conference modelled on the London Debt Conference of 1953, when half of Germany's post-World War Two debt was written off, leading to a sharp increase in economic growth.
- What Syriza aim to negotiate, as a result of debt conference, is cancellation of a substantial part of the debt, with repayment of the remaining debt tied to economic growth and the purchase of Greek sovereign bonds under the European Central Bank's €60bn monthly programme of quantitative easing.
- The comments of US President Barack Obama that "You cannot keep on squeezing countries that are in the midst of depression. At some point, there has to be a growth strategy in order for them to pay off their debts to eliminate some of their deficits."
- The recent solidarity delegation to Greece led by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Oliur Rahman, which visited Syriza politicians, migrant workers' groups, community organisations and trade unions.

This Council agrees

- To invite a representative of the Greek Solidarity Campaign to a future meeting to discuss what we can do in Tower Hamlets to help build the European movement against austerity.
- To invite a Greek delegation to this Town Hall.
- To learn lessons from Greek situation.

12.8 Motion regarding Social Landlords

Proposer: Councillor Dave Chesterton

Seconder: Councillor Amina Ali

This Council notes:

1. That as a result of a stock transfer there are now a number of Registered Providers managing stock that was previously managed by Tower Hamlets Council
2. That under current legislation, tenants of stock transferred properties have no right to a re-ballot and choose an alternative Registered Provider

This Council believes:

1. That some Registered Providers of stock transferred properties are performing poorly; failing in their responsibilities for maintenance, repair and general services for tenants and leaseholders. Among these are One Housing Group and Circle Housing,
2. That tenants should have a choice and where Registered Providers are performing poorly they should have the right to demand a re-ballot and chose an alternative landlord
3. That while holding a re-ballot and changing Registered Provider should be an option available to tenants, this should not simply be a reversal of a stock transfer

This Council resolves to:

1. Support Jim Fitzpatrick MP in his efforts to change legislation, enabling tenants to have a choice in their Registered Provider and where these are performing poorly to have the right to a re-ballot

12.9 Motion regarding Young People and Syria

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor Chris Chapman

That this council notes that a number of young people from schools in our borough have left their homes and families to support the Islamic State terror group in Syria.

Believes this to be a cause of deepest concern, sadness and alarm.

Recognises the challenging work now being undertaken by our borough's education, social service and Prevent teams to understand why and how these young people have been recruited by this terror group.

Notes the council's apology for misleading the High Court with regards to teenage girls from our borough feared to be in danger of fleeing to Syria.

Further recognises that while it may take some time to get the full background to these events, it is vital that community leaders, councillors and council officers are given as detailed a picture as possible about the types of young people at risk and the methods by which they are recruited from our borough.

Calls for a detailed report to be provided at the next Full Council on these issues so councillors can properly scrutinise borough services on their preparedness in both preventing and tackling similar episodes in future.

12.10 Motion regarding Cambridge Heath Sixth Form Centre Special Educational Needs Unit

Proposer: Councillor Danny Hassell

Seconder: Councillor Marc Francis

This Council notes:

1. The Cambridge Heath Sixth Form Centre was founded to provide a centre for further education for 16-18 year-olds from Morpeth, Swanlea and Oaklands Secondary Schools with the support and encouragement of LBTH;
2. The centre currently includes a separate unit for 21 youngsters with Special Educational Needs, which is based in two of the classrooms;
3. Parents of these children have been told that the SEN Unit will be closed from April and that there has been no consultation with those parents over this proposal, only very belated discussion over alternative arrangements for the continuing education of individual children.

This Council believes that:

1. Good quality teaching for children with Special Educational Needs within a strong learning environment is a vital part of our educational system;
2. Parents and other stakeholders, including LBTH should be consulted meaningfully before any decision is taken to reduce education provision.
3. The impact of these proposals on affect pupils and their families could be incredibly damaging to their education and their wider wellbeing.
4. Tower Hamlets schools should be leading London with high quality provision for children and young people with a range of needs.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Heads and Governing Bodies of Morpeth, Oaklands and Swanlea Schools to reconsider the decision to close the Cambridge Heath Six Form SEN Unit;
2. To call on the Mayor to support the campaign by parents to keep the Cambridge Heath SEN Unit open.
3. To request officers engage with Cambridge Heath Sixth Form to explore support for the SEN unit. For officers to provide proactive support to young people and their families who could be affected by these proposals.

12.11 Motion regarding TfL and CS2 Cycle Superhighway Upgrade

Proposer: Councillor Joshua Peck

Seconder: Councillor Rachael Saunders

This Council notes:

1. That TfL is currently carrying out works along Whitechapel Road/Mile End Road/Bow Road to implement the CS2 Cycle Superhighway upgrade
2. that these works are due to last until Spring 2016
3. that these works have included the temporary removal of traffic lights and pedestrian crossings outside Mile End tube, Coborn Road/St Clements and Coborn Street/British Estate
4. that the Coborn Street/British Street crossing is used every day by hundreds of pupils of Malmesbury Primary and Central Foundation secondary school
5. that the temporary lights at this crossing are poorly sited and ignored by some cars, and that this crossing is therefore unsafe
6. that the Mile End tube crossing is used every day by thousands of people to access the underground
7. that the Mile End tube crossing was totally removed at the start of the works, leaving many pedestrians to dodge fast-moving traffic as they crossed the busy four-lane road
8. that a temporary crossing was only reintroduced outside the tube after the intervention of the GLA member and local councillors but that this crossing is too narrow, leaving pedestrians stood in the busy road at peak times
9. that the temporary traffic lights and pedestrian signals at this crossing are unreliable and have been out of order for long periods, again leaving pedestrians at risk as they try to cross the road.

This Council believes:

1. That TfL has not properly taken into account the needs of pedestrians in its planning of these major works and that as a result it has put pedestrians at serious risk of harm.

This Council resolves:

1. to call on TfL to urgently review the pedestrian safety measures on the full length of the CS2 upgrade works to address its failings, and to urgently widen the Mile End tube pedestrian crossing point, to repair the temporary lights and to monitor them more regularly to ensure that they are swiftly repaired should they break down on future
2. to request Council Highways officers to meet urgently with TfL to make the concerns of Council clear and to agree an action plan to address the serious pedestrian safety risks on the route.

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 30th 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 the first ordinary Council meeting of 2015/16.

12.13 Motion regarding Tax Dodging

Proposer: Councillor Clare Harrison

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.