

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2015**

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, PROBITY AND GOVERNANCE**

**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 18<sup>th</sup> November 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 Rich Mix Cultural Foundation

**Proposer: Councillor Shahed Ali**

**Secunder: Councillor Oliur Rahman**

In assisting Mayor John Biggs in his commitment to this borough for openness and transparency, myself and Cllr Shahed Ali called-in the restricted report on Rich Mix, where not until the night before the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, were elected members privileged enough to actually see its contents. The report was hidden as well from the public, where Mayor Biggs authorised the discontinuation of the council's litigation against Rich Mix to claim a debt of £850k as well as authorising a grant of over £1.5m.

Two very big decisions at great cost to the tax payer, rushed through in secret the very first week of the current administration. Considering the writing off of the loan to begin with, the council notes that:

1. The prospect of winning the litigation against Rich Mix was very high, legal professionals advised a 70% chance of success.
2. Withdrawal of the claim means the council becomes liable for their legal costs, which in the report estimates at £160,000.
3. The drawn out litigation against Rich Mix has cost the council an estimated £180,000 in costs, which Rich Mix were initially liable for since the High Court dismissed their counter-claim.
4. There has been no evaluation of Rich Mix's financial stability to indicate that paying the debt of £850,000 would in fact lead to insolvency, and is only ever speculated as a possibility in the report.

**Considering the allocation of a grant to the sum of £1,570,482, the council notes that:**

1. After a preliminary hearing at the High Court on the 9th of July 2014, the counter-claim from Rich Mix for the section 106 money **was dismissed by the Court.**
2. Sustainability of the Rich Mix business has not been investigated, nor has it been acknowledged that it does not serve the community to allocate a grant to pay a debt, which is clearly what they intend, in part, to do with the money.
3. In the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, Mayor Biggs admitted that he had not viewed a business model of Rich Mix.
4. Mayor Biggs also acknowledges, as is stated in the report, that since Rich Mix opened it has received substantial amounts of public funding.
5. In the report it advises that Rich Mix has not been able to offer any significant additional benefits to justify further investment.

**Further to these considerations, in the name of openness and transparency, this council notes that:**

1. There exists a conflict of interest between the Labour group and Rich Mix, which makes the secrecy of this report, the writing off of debt and the allocation of more than £1.5m, highly controversial. Cllr Denise Jones, a board member for Rich Mix, attended the O&S meeting without declaring said interests and it is well known that previous Labour leader of this borough, Prof. Michael Keith, is the Chief of the board at Rich Mix.
2. In the short time given to draft this report, a consultation was made with the DCLG Commissioners who have provided a loophole for this decision to evade their scrutiny as they do not deem it be a “grant”.
3. The restriction of the report from public view and from elected members on the grounds of legal privilege is not relevant since the litigation has been discontinued.

**This council resolves:**

1. Publication of the report on which the decision by Mayor John Biggs is based
2. Terms and conditions for the grant:
  - a. ensuring the money is used to provide educational and inclusive services for the community.
  - b. ensuring the money is not used to pay off the debt.
  - c. quarterly reports and monitoring information of services delivered.
3. explanation be given in writing in relation to the grant evading scrutiny from the commissioners under section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, for the purposes of section 23 of that Act, disabled facilities grant, honouring a commitment to provide a substantial proportion of the grant to our residents living with a disability through targeted events, services and film.
4. Articulate and agree in consultation with the Council and local disability groups as to what specific provisions - in addition to any statutory responsibility placed on all publicly funded or subsidized organisations or commercial companies - will be provided to support the local disabled residents.
5. A full business case with a clear forecast and criteria to judge Rich Mix current situation, future performance and effectiveness be made available.
6. Clear details be made available as to which part is charitable and which part of business is for profit
7. How the salaries, management and administration is paid and what respective proportion is funded from commercial revenue and various funding streams.
8. What benefits will the community receive as a direct result of this funding involving nearly £2.5m of local residents money.
9. In terms of the business case what artistic benefits will it give local artists and how will the prime gallery space be utilised as a genuine gallery space.
10. As part of the business plan Richmix must commit to an Associated Artists Scheme where local artists and creatives can access small rent free work space for rotating periods to enable them to begin arts based business start ups
11. The business plan must also include Richmix to offer 10 Artistic and Gallery apprenticeships to local young people in Tower Hamlets.

12. Mayor Biggs to explain why despite his rhetoric about transparency and accountability, in terms of
13. Action, he took this critical and sensitive decision in secret, purged the report from elected Members, public.
14. And media and found a pseudo legal clause to rebrand this huge sum 'not a grant' to avoid being scrutinized by the Commissioners.
15. Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to add certain conditions in July at the Call-In meeting for the consideration of the Mayor. Now the decision has been confirmed, the Mayor to inform in writing if those recommendations has been adhered to.
16. As legal proceedings have been stopped as result of the decision, all information, court records, decisions and reports be made public immediately.

## **12.2 Motion in support of freedom of speech in Bangladesh**

**Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood**

**Seconder: Councillor Julia Dockerill**

This council notes with concern that in October, 2015, Faisal Arefin Dipon, a publisher, was killed at his office in the city centre of Dhaka, just hours after another publisher and two secular writers were seriously injured in an attack.

The council also notes that during this year, other writers and bloggers were attacked on the following dates:

- August 7<sup>th</sup>, Niloy Neel was hacked to death at his home by a gang armed with Machetes.
- 12<sup>th</sup> May, Ananta Bijoy Das was attacked and killed in Sylhet.
- 30<sup>th</sup> March Washiqur Rahman was hacked to death near his home in Dhaka.
- 27<sup>th</sup> February, Aviit Roy was attacked and killed whilst walking home from a book fair, and that in the same attack Mr Roy's wife was injured.

These crimes are an affront to the right of free speech and are an assault on democracy itself.

This Council condemns these crimes, supports the tens of thousands who have protested on the streets of Bangladesh and sends our heartfelt condolences to the friends and families of the victims of these crimes.

### **12.3 Motion regarding the Civic Centre**

**Proposer: Mayor John Biggs**

**Secunder: Councillor Sirajul Islam**

The Council notes that:

1. The lease on the current Mulberry Place Headquarters building expires in June 2020;
2. The facilities offered at Mulberry Place and associated Council offices including Albert Jacob House and John Onslow House are ageing and need to be updated
3. Mulberry Place is located at the extreme eastern end of the Borough
4. The review of options for a new civic centre undertaken since July 2015 has provided the opportunity to scrutinise proposals for a new civic headquarters as part of the former Royal London Hospital development and other options to determine which of these will offer best value for money, ensures a twenty first century working environment for staff delivering services to residents and provides a suitable location for the conduct of civic business
5. The retention of all existing One Stop Shops and Ideas Stores along with consideration of facilities in the Bethnal Green and Isle of Dogs areas of the Borough is an essential part of this proposal to ensure a strong local presence across all the geographical areas of the Borough.

Having considered the options, the Council welcomes the decision of the Mayor in Cabinet on 3 November 2015 to agree the former Royal London Hospital site in Whitechapel as the preferred location for the new civic centre and endorses the Mayor's subsequent decisions to enable the speediest implementation of this major project.

The Council further endorses the Mayor's proposal to establish a cross party reference group to keep the development of the civic centre under review and to provide regular updates to the Council.

## **12.4 Motion regarding junior doctors and the NHS**

**Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan**

**Seconder: Councillor Mahbub Alam**

### **This council notes:**

That the government is proposing to cut the pay of so-called junior doctors by up to 15 per cent.

That the definition of “junior” covers all doctors under consultant grade, meaning that the change affects those with up to eight years of experience on top of their five years of training.

That this cut is accompanied by substantial changes to the hours worked by doctors and the redefinition of “sociable hours” which means that the new contract include the change of “sociable working hours” from 7am-7pm Monday-Friday, to 7am-10pm Monday-Saturday, which means that hours for which junior doctors are paid a standard rate would increase from 60 to 90 a week.

That the number of doctors registering to work overseas has increased at an unprecedented rate since the government announced its proposed contract revisions.

That as a result of these changes the BMA is balloting doctors on strike action.

That the last time doctors went on strike was 1975, underlining the seriousness of the government’s attack on the hard-working, high-skilled medical professionals who are the backbone of the NHS.

That patients are putting themselves at risk by not attending hospital during the weekend in the mistaken belief – whipped up by the Conservative government – that there are no services available during these times.

That Conservative Party donors are handed NHS contracts worth £1.5 billion under the guise of health reforms. Circle Health landed £1.36billion worth of health service work after several of its investors gifted about £1.5million to the Conservatives: Care UK has contracts worth another £102.6million. Its chairman John Nash was made a peer after boosting Tory coffers by £247,250.

### **This council believes:**

That the Tory attack on the pay and working conditions of doctors whose hard work and dedication save thousands of lives every year is inexcusable.

That the proposals endanger patient safety by requiring doctors to work longer hours.

That should doctors choose to strike, they should be supported by patients and members of the public who all have an interest in ensuring that the NHS continues to provide the best possible care.

That areas with high deprivation, where stress on health services is greatest, will suffer disproportionately from the proposed changes.

**This council resolves:**

To ask the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to write to the Secretary of State for Health, on cross party basis if possible, condemning the proposed changes and to work with health professionals in the borough to resist their implementation.



## 12.5 Motion regarding the experimental borough wide 20mph speed limit

**Proposer: Councillor Chris Chapman**

**Secunder: Councillor Peter Golds**

This Council notes the requirement to make roads safer for all road users.

The council further notes that for the borough wide 20mph speed limit to be effective, then it must be achieved with the compliance of road users and cannot be enforced on them especially when the police are unable or unwilling to enforce the limit.

The council notes that in introducing the 20mph speed limit it stated:-

*'Successful 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits should be self-enforcing'*

However, the flawed process whereby the 20mph limit was introduced in Tower Hamlets makes self-enforcement improbable.

Residents do not feel that they were involved and there is already evidence that there is little respect regarding the way in which the borough wide 20mph limit has been implemented, not least as it was one of the final decisions of the former, discredited Mayoral administration.

There are already local concerns as residents have observed police vehicles routinely exceeding the speed limit whilst knowing that ambulances on emergency calls have to drive slowly because of this change does not inspire confidence.

The result is that whilst law-abiding citizens drive more slowly, others do not.

Actual road experience suggests that there is now a greater gap between the fastest and slowest vehicles on the road, more overtaking of vehicles and vehicles are slowing down before reaching the borough's few speed cameras which are currently the only methods of enforcing the speed limit. None of these changes improve safety and overtaking makes minor roads in particular more dangerous.

In 2014 when Tower Hamlets Council consulted on implementing a borough wide 20mph limit there were just 171 responses. It should be noted that those consulted by the former administration did not include elected ward councillors. The result was;

For a borough wide 20mph speed limit – 137

Against the limit – 23

Neutral – 11 people

This figure includes 103 responses (60%) organised by Tower Hamlets Wheelers (the local branch of the London Cycling Campaign) through an automated form on their website.

The council notes that according to the 2011 census there were 43,589 cars and vans owned by residents of the borough and vehicles per household range from 32% in Spitalfields and Banglatown to 54% in St Katharines and Wapping.

8,112 residents travelled to work by bicycle.

137 For responses represents 0.31% of the people with a car or 0.05% of the total population of the Borough.

The council believes that this is an inadequate response on which to design policy and to enforce changes on 43,589 overwhelmingly law abiding road users.

The council believes that if a borough wide 20mph limit is to be introduced beyond the eighteen month experiment as at present, then it must have credibility.

This Council requests the mayor to consider and report back to the council, the following;

1. That a decision on whether to end or continue the 20mph speed limit is taken via a resident's consultation and / or referendum.
2. That this consultation should take place during the spring of 2016, a year after the scheme was first implemented so that a final decision can be made before the end of the 18 month trial in October 2016.
3. That the consultation should be more sophisticated than a simple yes or no question and should to seek provide residents with more options about what speeds they think appropriate in different areas and different road types.
4. That the process by which this consultation takes place and the questions asked should be discussed in Council in advance.
5. That the Council seek to use this opportunity to fully engage with residents and properly engage with them. This Council in the past has had a lamentable record on public engagement, this is an opportunity to engage with and empower residents to make a major decision. It would therefore greatly assist with the Councils transparency agenda.
6. The Council should seek to engage more than the 171 people who responded to the first consultation and should aspire to engaging with at least 10,000 residents (25% of road users or less than 4% of total residents) if this limit is to have any credibility.

The council believes that roads are safer when road users use roads more safely. A borough wide 20mph limit will only work when the majority of road users respect the process by which the decision is reached.

Therefore, the Council calls on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider these matters when undertaking their review.

## **12.6 Motion regarding the protection of Tower Hamlets Heritage and Community Assets**

**Proposer: Councillor Andrew Cregan**

**Seconded: Councillor Joshua Peck**

This Council notes:

- There is a rich variety of historic buildings in our Borough that add immense value to our community
- That Tower Hamlets' "Local List" was compiled in 1973, alongside the Borough's Statutory List
- That although it has been added to over the years, the Council's Local List is not a complete list of all non-designated heritage assets in the Borough
- Heritage and community assets, in particular pubs, play an important role in our Borough, helping to provide local character, strengthen social networks, contribute to the local economy and provide an important focal point for local communities – hosting events, clubs and meetings that are necessary for community cohesion
- Once heritage and community assets are gone it is impossible to bring them back

This Council believes that:

- The protection of heritage and community assets must be a core consideration in the borough's approach to regeneration and development
- Developers should consult with local heritage and conservation groups early enough in the stages of a planning application to shape those applications appropriately
- Tower Hamlets would benefit from a review of policies to mitigate against harm to historic fabric by developers, before planning applications reach the Committee stage
- Soaring property prices and gaps in planning law mean that many local heritage and community assets can easily be turned into a supermarket, flats or even demolished
- Heritage and community assets must be protected from wilful neglect and property speculation

This Council resolves:

- To revise the Local List in its entirety as soon as possible, to include all non-designated heritage assets and historic public houses
- To establish a process whereby local residents can make additions to the

#### Local List easily

- To create a local “Heritage at Risk Register” incorporating all at risk buildings on the Local List
- To take a proactive stance in monitoring the condition of historic local buildings on a local “Heritage at Risk Register” through the use of notices issued by the Planning Enforcement Team
- To protect community assets under threat from change of use by “Article 4 Directions”
- To implement a specific pub protection policy to be incorporated into the Local Plan as well as a separate policy to enhance community infrastructure

## **12.7 Motion regarding new civic engagement strategy**

**Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman**

**Seconded: Councillor Maium Miah**

### **This council notes:**

That Tower Hamlets Council undertakes a wide variety of consultations, engagement exercises and reviews involving residents and stakeholders.

That most of these activities are well planned and officers generally work hard to make these exercises outcome-oriented and successful however there is a potential for improvement.

That, over the recent years, great strides have been made in terms of improvements but there seem to be still some existence of overlapping activities, resulting in waste of resources, working in silos, lack of effectiveness and duplication of efforts, as well as, lack of joined-up approach.

That recent interim analysis of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Transparency Commission Survey relating to responses from Tower Hamlets residents (albeit, not precisely a statistically representative sample, with potential risks of usual suspects or those with a particular agenda, which can be considered in weighing the evidence and context in the wash up) - must be taken into account and given serious consideration by Mayor Biggs in moving forward and in order to further improve our civic participation, democratic and partnership engagement structure and practices.

### **This council resolves:**

That in the spirit of working together for the benefit of residents of Tower Hamlets, Tower Hamlets Independent Group proposes that the Council should develop a 'new Civic Engagement Strategy' with transparency, accountability and genuine desire to listen to residents and other stakeholders at the heart of its organisational ethos, work and culture. This should be done on cross-party basis to make it more effective and to develop 'buy-in' from all concerned.

That Tower Hamlets Independent Group, in the spirit of cross-party working and kinder politics, would like to record our constructive suggestions in developing a new 'Civic Engagement Strategy' taking into account the points highlighted above and streamlining the overall activities, without any impact

On the frontline services or jobs. This should also consider the following:

That it must be open to all residents, members, staff, partners, trade unions and stakeholders - with clear information, impact and explanation - for comments, suggestions and discussion, supplemented with an awareness and publicity campaign with ample time and options to respond through a variety of means;

That the Unison presentation and the Unite response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5th October 2015 in relation to transparency, accountability and engagement must be taken on board in letter and spirit;

That the new strategy should use all strands of engagement avenues - including but not exclusively online - in order to ensure fair access to and opportunities for all; and

That constructive suggestions, including this motion, about our new proposed 'Civic Engagement Strategy' be sent to relevant officers, some of which have already been touched upon in our OSTC response to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Mayor to consider, enact and incorporate.

## **12.8 Motion regarding Development on the Isle of Dogs**

**Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds**

**Seconder: Councillor Andrew Wood**

### **This council notes:**

- The south-east of the borough is on the verge of becoming Europe's version of Hong Kong, with a higher population density than the real thing.
- That the GLA Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar is an important component of this work but there are many other elements of the Council's responsibilities, which will need to be adapted to suit the new emerging local conditions.
- Development in the area exceeds the London Plan maximum density recommendations by a factor of two (while the London Plan recommends a maximum of 405 units per hectare in an area with excellent transport connections, the average of the last thirteen approved applications in the area equal 900 units per hectare).

### **This council further notes:**

That The London Plan recommends a minimum of 10,000 homes on the Isle of Dogs.

- That nevertheless current estimates suggest approximately 34,000 homes are in the process of being delivered or have been since 2011.
- The GLA 'City in the East' document indicate that they believe 30,000 homes are expected to be delivered on the Isle of Dogs along with more in Blackwall. The GLA document also indicates that the Canary Wharf workforce will double in size as another 110,000 workers fill the new office buildings with planning approval or under construction.

### **This council notes the following issues:**

As an example of the issues that need to be resolved, three of the new buildings planned in the area require refuse trucks to drive underground to pick up waste.

Will this be included in the new refuse contract and what will be the cost implications?

There remain questions as to the public health implications of thousands of Children living in very tall tower blocks with limited access to parks and open spaces

It is known that across Tower Hamlets approximately 45% of households have access to a car but with most new developments being car free or with less than 10% car parking provision how will this operate when families need cars to transport children and elderly relatives?

How will the police and other authorities handle actual and expected anti-social behaviour on what will be the most densely populated streets in London with no centrally controlled CCTV cameras

Will there be Section 106 provision for a new police station to cope with this increase?

How will residents, current and future, be assured that the mobile and fixed broadband networks are able to cope with this scale of development?

What assurances will be given to ensure that there is adequate water supply?

What provision will be made for an ageing population?

How will public realm receive adequate provision when open space will be the responsibility and under the control of many different developers?

**This council believes:**

That the answers to these and other questions require a unique degree of co-ordination across the Council and its stakeholders.

- That resolving these issues will also require learning lessons from other dense parts of the world such as Hong Kong and may well require Council staff to learn first-hand how to adapt existing Tower Hamlets policies to this new environment.
- That the council needs to start planning for this level of change sooner rather than later, and that the sooner it does so the smoother and more efficiently it will adapt itself to serving this new environment.

**This council resolves:**

That the Mayor be requested to create a special Council taskforce to co-ordinate across all Council departments & external stakeholders.



## 12.9 Motion regarding the Housing and Planning Bill

**Proposer: Councillor Rachel Blake**

**Seconded: Councillor Amina Ali**

This Council notes that:

1. The Government published a Housing and Planning Bill for First reading on 13 October 2015.
2. The second reading took place on the 2 November 2015 and that the Bill was carried at its second reading in Parliament.
3. The Bill is now at Committee Stage.
4. The Bill includes:
  - a. Introduction of a General Duty to promote Starter Homes
  - b. Measures to force Councils to sell high value council homes
  - c. Measures to require higher earners to pay higher rents and for the increased income to be paid to the Secretary of State
  - d. Measures to implement the Right to Buy for Housing Association Tenants through a on a voluntary basis.
5. That Cllr Philippa Roe, Conservative Leader of Westminster Council, has said “it is absolutely vital that the proceeds of right-to-buy from London are kept in London.” (<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/senior-tory-says-right-to-buy-could-wipe-out-swathes-of-social-housing-10426462.html>)
6. Rushanara Ali MP and Jim Fitzpatrick MP voted against the Bill at the second reading.
7. Zac Goldsmith MP, in the House of Commons on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November, said:
  - “the gap between supply and demand remains very wide, and without radical action, it will grow wider still, further pricing Londoners out of their own city”
  - “closing the gap between supply and demand, therefore, is the absolute priority”
  - “council homes in London are far more valuable than they are elsewhere, and without a change we will see a disproportionate flow of resources out of London”
  - “the amendment that I intend to table after today’s debate will ask for a binding guarantee that London will see a net gain in affordable housing as a consequence of this policy—a guarantee that London will see, in addition to the replaced housing association homes, at least two low-cost homes

built for every single high-value home sold”

- “the bottom line is that we are going to have to use every single available lever to deliver affordable homes at all incomes”

8. The Mayor in Cabinet in September 2015 approved the development of new affordable homes

**This Council believes:**

1. London’s successful future is threatened without sufficient supply of genuinely affordable homes
2. Tower Hamlets has historically provided a vital role for supplying homes for households on low incomes who play a vital role in London’s economy and that role is under threat.
3. This Bill will have a severe detrimental effect on the ability of LB Tower Hamlets to address housing need and demand in Tower Hamlets.
4. This Bill will force many households to leave the borough as they will no longer be able to afford to live in Tower Hamlets.
5. This Bill will undermine the mixed and diverse communities that we are proud to be part of in Tower Hamlets.
6. There is no provision within the Bill to ensure that the proceeds from the Right to Buy of Housing Association homes or from the forced sale of Council homes will stay within Tower Hamlets.

**This Council calls on:**

1. The Mayor to submit evidence to the committee to make the case for amendments to the Bill to ensure London’s future success
2. The Mayor and all councillors actively campaign to highlight the disastrous consequences of this Bill

## **12.10 Motion regarding the Trade Union Bill**

**Proposer: Councillor Clare Harrison**

**Seconder: Councillor Rachael Saunders**

### **This Council notes that:**

1. In February 2015 the United Nations agency, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), reaffirmed its belief that 'without protecting a right to strike, Freedom of Association, in particular the right to organise activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers' interests, cannot be fully realised.'
2. In July 2015 the Conservative government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions and their members to make it harder to win ballots for industrial action. This will only be lawful if there is a 50% turnout among trade union members entitled to vote in addition to a simple majority voting for industrial action.
3. The Conservatives seek a further requirement for those working in 'important public services' to secure the support of 40% of all trade union members. Non-voters will be counted as 'against' industrial action which is contrary to ILO guidance. This means that on a 50% turnout, 80% will have to vote for industrial action for it to be lawful in many public services.
4. No such thresholds apply to elections in local government, for police and crime commissioners, or in European or Westminster elections.
5. The government has refused the request of trade unions to make electronic balloting legally permissible and increase turnout this way.

### **This Council further notes that:**

1. The proposed Conservative legislation will also introduce greater restrictions for picketing.
2. These include requirements on unions to inform the police of the name of a picket supervisor and ensure they have a letter of authorisation that they must be required to carry, inform the police of how many members will be expected to attend a picket line and what banners or materials will be used as well as to notify the police of details of how trade unions intend to use social media during a dispute.
3. The Conservative government wants to remove the ban for employers to employ agency workers during a period of lawful industrial action.
4. The government wants to grant Ministers the power to reduce the amount of facilities time agreed by employers and the workforce which is in place to ensure adequate workplace representation.

5. Trade unions take industrial action for a wide range of reasons including defending wages and pensions, conditions at work as well as health and safety.

**This Council believes that:**

1. The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights which should be respected in a free and democratic society.
2. The Conservative government's bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions to trade union members.
3. Workplace representation ensures access to justice and has benefits across whole organisations.
4. The government's Trade Union Bill is part of a disturbing trend to erode civil liberties and inhibit the right to speak out or protest against the government.
5. The Conservative government's Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider civil society.

**This Council resolves to:**

1. Request the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the council's opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations.
2. Support the TUC and civil liberties groups in campaigning to defend the right to strike and oppose the Trade Union Bill.
3. Continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.

## **12.11 Motion regarding Mainstream Grants and Commissioners**

**Proposer: Councillor Rachael Saunders**

**Secunder: Councillor Danny Hassell**

### **This Council notes:**

1. The decision of Department for Communities and Local Government to appoint Commissioners to exercise and oversee certain executive functions within the council, following serious governance concerns identified under the previous administration.
2. The Mayor's commitment to open and transparent decision making
3. That the role of the commissioners is due to the previous mayor's failures and that we need to work towards an exit of the commissioners and the reassertion of democratic decision making.
4. The letter from the Department of Communities and Local Government (dated 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015) welcoming progress against directions.
5. That the Best Value Action Plan six month progress report on performance showed that 91% of the items identified have been completed or are due to be completed in line with the targets set.
6. That as a result of this, DCLG wrote to confirm that the 6<sup>th</sup> May Directions would lapse on the 31<sup>st</sup> October.
7. That the commissioners no longer have the power to directly run the council, but will remain to carry out some functions.
8. The previous mayor and Tower Hamlets First failed to co-operate with the process – the Labour Group has and will continue to take a more active role in grants decisions.
9. The importance of scrutiny of the executive's grants decisions.
10. Recent decisions made on Mainstream Grants (MSG) made by the Commissioners for 2015-2018
11. There were over 370 applications for MSG, with £9.1m in funding allocated to 131 projects in the borough
12. The importance of a strong, open, honest and supportive relationship with local third sector organisations.
13. A number of Labour and Conservative councillors attended the Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting for grant funding allocations, to highlight a number of excellent local organisations who were not recommended for funding.

**This Council believes:**

1. There was a severe lack of transparency and accountability regarding decisions on grant making under the previous administration.
2. There was a lack of clear and consistent benchmarking, objectives and auditing for grant funding under the previous administration
3. As a result the former Mayor undermined the process which led, with other governance failures, to the appointment of Commissioners
4. There is a clear role for elected members in informing the grant making process and understanding local need, but that this must be done within a clear framework to ensure transparency, scrutiny and accountability
5. The mainstream grants process has a key role in supporting the excellent work of many local organisations
6. There is a need to establish a fair process for grant funding, which reflects local need of communities across the borough and maintains the confidence of local residents

**This Council resolves:**

1. To call on the Mayor to establish a fair, transparent and robust process for future grant funding so that residents, voluntary organisations and other relevant authorities can be satisfied that decisions on grant funding can be determined by the council and its elected members.
2. To call on the Mayor to introduce an effective standing scrutiny mechanism
3. To call on the Executive to do everything within its power to ensure a fair process for grants funding and to work with the CVS to support organisations in accessing further funding.