


Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL Wednesday 20 January 2016	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Director of Law, Probity and Governance Report Title: Questions Submitted by Members of the Council	Classification: Unrestricted

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services.
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions that were submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Mayor, the Speaker or the Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee at the Council meeting on Wednesday 20th January 2016.
2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2 as amended, questions relating to Executive functions and decisions taken by the Mayor are put to the Mayor unless he delegates such a decision to another Member, who will therefore be responsible for answering the question. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will answer questions directed to the Mayor.
3. Council Procedure Rule 12.5 provides for an answer to take the form of a written answer circulated to the questioner, a reference to a published work or a direct oral answer.
4. There is a time limit of thirty minutes at the Council meeting for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any questions not put within this time are dealt with by way of written responses.
5. This document includes the written response to each question submitted, whether or not put orally at the meeting. Where a question was put orally at the meeting, this document also includes a summary of any supplementary question and the response to this.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

22 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

8.1 Question from Councillor Danny Hassell

What assessment has this council made of the potential impact in this borough of the Tory government's proposals to change school funding allocations?

8.2 Question from Councillor Oli Rahman:

Labour party, including Parliamentary Labour Party, has adopted a clear anti-austerity stance and opposed George Osborne's fiscal charter, when will Mayor Biggs listen to Independent Group and take action locally by joining hands with neighbouring Labour Mayors and other like-minded leaders and opposition groups to lead a joint anti-austerity campaign against the cuts and will he give a clear pledge to protect frontline services, the most vulnerable and jobs in his forthcoming budget?

8.3 Question from Councillor Marc Francis

Will the Deputy Mayor for Community Safety let me know what action has been taken by LBTH and the Metropolitan Police following the recent knife-point robberies on the towpath of the Hertford Union canal and Hackney Cut at Roach Point?

8.4 Question from Councillor Craig Aston

Will the Mayor inform the council how much the Bonfire Night fireworks display in Victoria Park cost taxpayer's and can he further explain why he thinks this is the best use of council resources?

8.5 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar

What is the Council doing to help long-term unemployed and economically inactive residents to get into work?

8.6 Question from Councillor Muhammad Mustaqim:

What practical steps are being taken by the Mayor to reach out and help many small community organizations who are delivering fantastic services, are loved by local people and helping residents in line with the Council's broad corporate objectives and community plan but are suffering significantly and will potentially collapse as a result of cuts in their recent MSG funding. Can Mayor Biggs, at the very least, agree with me and arrange a few sessions, particularly for smaller organisations with non-existent or limited resources and capability, to see how they can be supported to make a bid for any emergency assistance from the Council, so that they can use that fund as their match funding capacity to make further applications elsewhere. This will also help them understand

recent changes in criteria and what steps could they take to make a potentially successful bid for future Council funding if possible?

8.7 Question from Councillor Andrew Cregan

What is the Council doing to ensure historic fabric is protected at the so-called Norton Folgate site in Spitalfields, particularly given the continued interest by developers in developing the site?

8.8 Question from Councillor Julia Dockerill

The Borough wide 20mph Experimental Traffic Order is due to end this September. Will the Mayor consider whether to extend, amend or end the test? Given that only 103 people supported the original reduction in speed versus 43,589 car & van drivers in the Borough how will the Council include all road users in that decision?

8.9 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin

Does the Mayor have any strategy in place to improve community cohesion further in the Borough?

8.10 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan:

There has been much criticism of the housing bill, especially the extension of right to buy and the forced sell-off of social housing stock. But the "pay to stay" scheme will have a huge impact on tenants especially in Tower Hamlets, how will the Mayor address this scheme so that tenants are protected from facing eviction?

8.11 Question from Councillor John Pierce

Can the lead member give us an update on the performance of the youth service?

8.12 Question from Councillor Chris Chapman

As many London local authorities issue on the spot fines for spitting and have raised considerable sums of revenue. Will the Mayor explain why has the council not taken full advantage of these powers and used them more extensively in a bid to stamp out the disgusting habit of spitting in public?

8.13 Question from Councillor Mahbub Alam:

Can the Cabinet Member for culture outline the vision, strategy, activities and action plan for her brief for 2016/17 and beyond. In particular, when can we expect to see the draft of

Council's overarching 'cultural strategy', and what is the envisaged outcome or objective of the Somali Taskforce?

8.14 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Will the Mayor announce who within the council is responsible for overseeing the operation of the heliport at Vanguard on Westferry Road?

8.15 Question from Councillor Harun Miah

In addition to social housing, affordability and rent controls – social cleansing and gentrification have become a serious issue in Tower Hamlets, what is Mayor Biggs doing in his affordability commission to ensure local people are not forced out, priced out or bussed out of the Borough? How many families or people on the housing waiting list have been moved out of the borough and/or placed in bed and breakfast, since June 2010 until December 2015, with monthly breakdown for each year?

8.16 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

In 2013/14 the Council estimated that its aggregate infrastructure cost to be over approximately £530 million and that CIL would only cover 40% of that amount leaving a significant shortfall. Does the Mayor have an update on those numbers and if the shortfall cannot be filled what impact that will that have on the Local Plan currently being consulted on and the scale of development?

8.17 Question from Councillor Abdul Asad

Ambulance services in Tower Hamlets have failed to meet monthly target response times. Recently, the CQC recommended the London Ambulance Service be placed into special measures after an inspection resulted in an overall rating of 'inadequate'. What has Mayor Biggs actually done, through CCGs, H&WB or otherwise, as local Mayor with responsibility of public health - to ensure people of Tower Hamlets can have a reasonable ambulance service sent to them in decent time when they are hit with a crisis or tragedy?

8.18 Question from Councillor Shah Alam

Does the Mayor agree that it will be far more effective if the Somali Taskforce was chaired by the only Somali Cllr in the Council?

8.19 Question from Councillor Kibria Choudhury

Can the Mayor provide exact figures as to how much money will the Council save by cutting the East End Life (EEL) to a quarterly publication, as according to his own response, it brought income of around £1.1m and the cost of weekly production is £1.2m and the Council still needs to have Communications strategy, team and tools to engage with the residents? In addition, in his response the Mayor stated that no loss of jobs until the end of financial year, how many jobs will be lost after the year end? and lastly, following the cut to EEL, Can the Mayor guarantee that all statutory and advertisements will not go to East London Advertiser (ELA) and explain what % might or will go to ELA - which has been extraordinarily generous in its praise for Mayor Biggs recently?

8.20 Question from Councillor Aminur Khan

Will the Mayor agree to put in place 'Local Stakeholders Forum' as proposed by the Independent Group for the implementation phase of the new Civic Centre in Whitechapel?

8.21 Question from Councillor Maium Miah

Following my previous Council question and response from the Mayor on this matter, is the Mayor now in a position to tell members and residents whether the Council will be better off or worse off, and by how much, under the new business rate retention proposal announced by the Chancellor a few months ago, if not when will he be in such a position?

8.22 Question from Councillor Suluk Ahmed

Please provide a monthly breakdown of statistics, in numbers as well as in percentage terms, relating to reported Islamophobic and anti-Semitic hate crimes in Tower Hamlets since 2011 until December 2015?