


Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>COUNCIL</b>  Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Law, Probity and Governance  <b>Report Title:</b> Petitions Submitted by the Public	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Tom Scholes-Fogg, Committee Services Officer, Democratic Services.
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## SUMMARY

1. The Council's Constitution provides for up to three petitions to be presented at each ordinary Council meeting. At the Budget Council Meeting, only petitions that relate to the Council's budget or the setting of the Council Tax may be presented. These are taken in order of receipt. This report sets out the valid petitions submitted for presentation at the Council meeting on Wednesday 24th February 2016.
2. The deadline for receipt of petitions for this meeting is noon on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016. However, at the time of agenda despatch one petition has already been received as set out overleaf.
3. The texts of the petition received for presentation to this meeting are set out in the attached report. In each case the petitioners may address the meeting for no more than three minutes. Members may then question the petitioners for a further four minutes. Finally, the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair of Committee may respond to the petition for up to three minutes.
4. Any outstanding issues will be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will respond to those outstanding issues in writing within 28 days.
5. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.

## **5.1 Petition relating to Budget Cuts and Council Reserve Funds. (Petition from Ms Naomi Byron and others)**

### **Summary of Petition:**

We, the undersigned urge Mayor John Biggs to stop the devastating cocktail of cuts, a record Council Tax rise of c. 4% and new/additional fees/charges that will result in damaging long term impact on residents in his Tory-inspired budget. This is particularly careless and damaging given the fact that he has inherited a record £242,000,000 overall reserves with a clearly available £71,000,000 general reserves money, from the previous administration, which Mayor John Biggs can choose to spend between now and next few years rather than acting as a 'Tory middleman of cuts' support by his Blairite Cabinet. This money is on top of the funding that the Council has just received from the Government for the work carried out by the previous administration. In addition, Tower Hamlets Council has received more money this year than anticipated – extra £3,860,000 in grant and a new instalment of £13,200,000 for decent homes for the work carried out by the previous administration, together with a further £100,000 for tackling rogue landlords, as well as, budgeted increase in the local business rates of up to £124,000,000 and growing tax base. In light of these facts we urge Mayor John Biggs to stop the following cuts from his budget or to propose a 'no austerity, no redundancy' budget – or ideally, a 'no cuts' budget rather than acting as a 'Tory middleman' while working with like-minded left-wing forces to put pressure on the Tory Government to end ideologically driven austerity cuts. We ask Mayor John Biggs and his Cabinet to remove the following cuts at the very least from their budget:

- c.4% increase in the Council Tax – hitting lower income and struggling families harder than others.
- Cuts to incontinence laundry services affecting the most vulnerable. Just to save £40,000.
- Removal of 10 waste THEOs resulting in less resources to deal with waste, graffiti and general environmental waste.
- New charges for Elderly Social Care and Learning Disability users which will disproportionately hit over 65s (58%), females (55%), Christians (38%), Muslims (29%).
- Cuts to school crossing patrols (lollypop people) putting safety of children at risk without conformation from schools.
- Cuts to child, adolescent and mental health services less resources, concerns about violence and suicides.
- Cuts to children services – result in closures or deteriorating services / disappearance of children centre and nurseries.
- Cuts to burial subsidy and trips to Gorsefield by school children to learn history, affecting the most disadvantaged pupils.