

Conservative Budget Amendments 2016/17

Proposed: Cllr Chris Chapman

Seconded: Cllr Andrew Wood

This Council welcomes:

1. The Mayor's decision to scrap certain wasteful elements of the previous administration, such as the Mayoral car and chauffeur, and a Mayoral office costing over £350,000.
2. That in tough financial times the Government's changes to Revenue Support Grant result in Tower Hamlets having the sixth-lowest reduction in the Settlement Funding Assessment in the country.
3. The Mayor of London's budget for 2016/17, which through careful stewardship has resulted in a 6.4% cut in the GLA precept compared with 2015/16.

This Council believes:

1. That while the new administration is making a start in reversing the policies of the previous administration, a more forceful start is needed.
2. That a 3.99% council tax rise is unnecessarily high and increases pressures on the finances of hard working local families, with no obvious corresponding benefit.
3. That proposals to implement a 'no cuts' budget involve using tens of millions of pounds from reserves, which would not be repeatable in 2017/18, and which would endanger the council's financial stability.

This Council further believes:

1. that the 'One Tower Hamlets' agenda is a legacy of the previous administration, which worked on any principle but 'One Tower Hamlets', and should accordingly be scrapped.
2. that integration of the community is far better enhanced, and greater opportunities made open to local residents, if there was greater provision for English language classes (ESOL). This should be funded by eliminating spending on non-statutory translation.
3. that the council's continued dragging of heels over East End Life under the previous administration was a wanton attempt to continue political propaganda in defiance of the Government's Publicity Code.
4. that this administration should abandon completely a newssheet, which retains the potential to be a propaganda vehicle for the administration that the borough could do without, saving the council taxpayer hundreds of thousands of pounds.
5. That the proposed slashing of the police budget of £270,000 is unwarranted, compromises the public safety, and that the explanation given for this in the budget pack is a party political attempt to transfer the blame for this administration disavowing responsibility for the safety of residents.
6. That Council THEOs are no substitute for an integrated policing force, and that funding for accredited THEOs should be accordingly transferred to fund local ward based PCSOs instead.
7. That the council needs to manage growth effectively, and begin thinking creatively and strategically about providing better services at less cost. Boroughs across London have made substantial savings through merging back-office functions. Creating such joint workings with other boroughs should now be less difficult than it was under an isolationist administration.
8. that, in line with the Mayor's comments at the January council meeting, a fireworks display that costs £120,000 is not justified in the present financial climate.

This Council amends the Mayor's budget as follows:

1. Implement the following reductions in expenditure:

Description	2016/17 Impact	Detail
Mother tongue	£707,000	Remove budget for Mother Tongue
Ethical charter recommendations	£336,000	Option 3 - Low impact version of Ethical Care Charter
One Tower Hamlets	£327,000	Reduction in external payments budget for One Tower Hamlets
Trade Union Facility Time	£258,000	Removal of funding for full time staff
East End Life	£250,000	Discontinue East End Life, and carry out statutory advertising through local newspapers and online
Bonfire Night	£120,000	Ending free event
Celebration events	£100,000	Removal of four celebration events
Non-statutory translation	£82,000	Stop non-statutory translation of documents into foreign languages in order to promote cohesion, and follow DCLG best practice (see ESOL below)
Faith buildings	£53,000	Remove staffing budget related to the administration of the faith building scheme
Media monitoring	£25,000	Ending external cost of monitoring THC news
External venues	£16,000	Ending of use of external venues for staff events
Town Hall subscriptions	£15,000	

2. Implement the following increases in expenditure:

Description	2016/17 Impact	Detail
1.99% Council Tax rebate	£1,471,292	Provide a 1.99% rebate to all households in the borough, worth £17.62 to Band D households
Police extra funding	£200,000	To be left to Borough Commander whether to invest in additional officers or overtime allowing SNT's team to do more night work
ESOL classes	£171,500	Fund extra ESOL classes with the aim of abolishing waiting lists for ESOL, in order to promote cohesion in the borough
Estate regeneration	£50,000	To help fund residents group dealing with regeneration, local version of Michael Heseltine £140m national budget
Joint working	£50,000	Fund to help deliver future savings programme through working with other Councils
Planning enforcement	£45,000	One extra staff member to help enforce agreed planning applications
CCTV control staff	£40,000	One extra operator
Docklands Heritage Boards	£7,208	Repairing existing history boards

3. Reverse the following proposed cut in expenditure:

Description	2016/17 Impact	Detail
Police	£270,000	Reverse the Mayor's proposed cut which is unnecessary and will impact a vital front line service

4. Implement the following increases in income:

Description	2016/17 Impact	Detail
Marsh Wall road rent	£16,000	Charge an annual rent to the developers of the City Pride (Landmark Pinnacle) site, which is occupying part of Marsh Wall road contrary to planning application

5. Reallocate the budgets for the following items:

Description	2016/17 Impact	Detail
THEOs	£1,422,000	Re-allocate money from Council 'police' THEO's to Met police PCSO's
Smoking cessation	£1,300,000	Re-allocate money from ring-fenced public health grant from smoking cessation to mental health, given large amount of smoking cessation material available elsewhere

into these items:

Description	2016/17 Impact	Detail
THEO PCSO replacement	£1,422,000	
Mental health	£1,300,000	

Capital Budget

Description	2016/17 Impact	Detail
3D Model	£20,000	To follow example of Southwark Council and GLA and invest in a 3D model of the Borough for planning purposes