

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2008**

**MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 11**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD,  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**SUMMARY**

1. Ten motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for the Council meeting on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008.
2. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008, the order in which the motions are listed is by turns, one from each group, continuing in rotation until all motions submitted are included. The rotation starts with any group(s) 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 unless notice of 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 which have been received.

## **11.1 Motion submitted by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding Utilities Charges**

**Proposed: Councillor Abjol Miah**

**Seconded: Councillor Dulal Uddin**

1) This Council notes:

That utilities charges have risen far above the general rate of inflation in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere;

that these higher charges are impacting particularly adversely on those less well off in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere who spend a higher proportion of their incomes on heating, etc;

that many pensioners and others on low incomes in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere face the real possibility of being dangerously cold this winter and some may even die as a result of these higher charges and as they seek to economise on heating;

that this situation is made much worse where there has been no investment in heating insulation such as double glazing which would bring down heating costs and be a positive measure to help against global warming;

that too many Council properties have not yet had the necessary investment in double glazing and other heat insulation measures to economise on heating costs;

that expanded investment in double glazing and other refurbishing and heat insulation measures if brought forward would constitute counter-cyclical spending helping to mitigate the effects of the growing recession.

2) This Council believes:

That the Government should impose a windfall tax on the higher profits of the utilities companies;

that the Government should use the proceeds of this windfall tax to help those who have been plunged into fuel poverty;

that the Government should also make available to this council the funds necessary to bring forward and expand a crash programme of investment in double glazing and other heat insulation measures alongside other needed refurbishment of council and RSL property;

that it was a disastrous error for the Thatcher government to have privatised the utilities companies;

that the utilities companies should be returned to public ownership with proper accountability at the earliest opportunity.

3) This council resolves to draw up an urgent action plan to address the problem of fuel poverty in Tower Hamlets and the dangers it presents to the most vulnerable in our community.

4) This council would welcome a national campaign for a windfall tax and a cap on utilities charges and other urgent measures to address fuel poverty and obscene fuel price rises.

## **11.2 Motion submitted by Councillor Stephanie Eaton regarding Community Cohesion and ID Cards**

**Proposed: Councillor Stephanie Eaton**

**Seconded: Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan**

This Council notes:

1. That Parliament has created identity card legislation.
2. This legislation will have an impact on all residents within Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

1. That the proposed scheme will impose substantial and disproportionate costs on the Council.
2. That the cost of ID cards would be better spent on employing crime prevention measures such as more police officers, and target hardening.
3. ID cards have the potential to have a negative impact on social cohesion and notes the concerns of the Metropolitan Police Service to that effect:

*'The scheme could become compulsory prematurely for those disadvantaged members of society, because they would have to have an ID Card in order to access Social Security Benefits, etc. It should also be noted that many of the visible ethnic minorities are over-represented in this socio-economically deprived group. We have severe reservations that the scheme could add to tensions at a time when the police service is investing greatly in gaining confidence across all communities'.*

This Council will:

1. Make it a policy of the Council to ensure that national identity cards would not be required to access council services or benefits unless specifically required to do so by Act of Parliament.
2. Take no part in any pilot scheme or feasibility work in relation to the introduction of the national identity cards.

3. Only co-operate with the national identity card scheme where to do otherwise would be unlawful.
4. Affiliate to the NO2ID campaign whose supporters already include MPs and Peers of all parties, Borough, County and District Councils, and unions (including UNISON, the largest union in the UK with 1.3 million members).

### **11.3 Motion submitted by Councillor Tim Archer regarding Leaseholder Services**

**Proposed: Councillor Tim Archer**

**Seconded: Councillor Peter Golds**

Council notes the continuing dissatisfaction of leaseholders with the overall service they receive from Tower Hamlets Council, particularly in respect of:

- information and consultation on both major works and annual service charges
- the overall level of both major works and annual charges, particularly the administration and management element.
- the value for money that these charges represent and the quality of the services that leaseholders are asked to pay for

Furthermore this council notes the following recent developments:

- the £50 refund being made to leaseholders by this council in recognition of leaseholder grievances and excessive charges to date
- the recent Lister House Leasehold Valuation Tribunal case that the Council lost.

This council therefore resolves to call on the executive to:

- provide leaseholders with an appropriate level of reassurance on the process and resulting charges levied by the Council, by way of an independent audit of leaseholder services to establish that Leaseholder service charges are fair and appropriately calculated. This review should be carried out by an recognised independent firm of auditors.

#### **11.4 Motion submitted by Councillor Alex Heslop regarding support for the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Sector**

**Proposed: Councillor Alex Heslop**

**Seconded: Councillor Denise Jones**

This Council recognises that there is a diverse and healthy co-operative sector in Tower Hamlets with a combined turnover of approximately £50 million and also appreciates the important role that co-operatives and other social enterprises can play in community and economic regeneration initiatives. Although there are many successful co-operative enterprises operating in Tower Hamlets such as Tower Hamlets Community Credit Union, Tower Hamlets CDA and Greenwich Leisure (effectively a workers co-op), as well as several food co-ops and housing co-operatives, there is not a single council officer with a specific remit or indeed expertise for working with the co-operative & social enterprise sectors.

This Council resolves to do the following:

- Allocate responsibility for supporting the co-operative & social enterprise sectors to the Lead Member for Regeneration as well as a designated council officer who will promote and support new mutual models for the provision of community services, including housing, pre-school childcare, residential and home care, recycling and leisure. Made possible through service reviews, externalising, or re-contracting services and procurement procedures.
- Organise an annual event to celebrate International Co-operatives Day in partnership with the local Co-operative Movement; this could also involve the Tower Hamlets Partnership and its Creating and Sharing Prosperity Community Plan Action Group.
- Develop procurement strategies that make a direct link between the Community Plan and other strategic objectives and contract specifications ensuring that community benefits can be fully integrated into the procurement process.
- Work with the Co-operative Sector and London Development Agency to improve access to finance and support for socially and mutually owned businesses.
- Work with staff and unions on a partnership basis in the creation of new cooperative services

## **11.5 Motion submitted by Councillor Dulal Uddin regarding the Recession**

**Proposed: Councillor Dulal Uddin**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This Council notes:

That there has been a catastrophic slump in the housing market where new mortgage approvals by value are just 2% of the same point a year ago;

that manufacturing is shrinking at a faster rate than at any time over the last 17 years;

that house repossessions and unemployment are inexorably rising;

that we are facing the prospect of the worst recession since the 1930s, including the appalling loss of employment in the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher when more than four million people had no job.

2) This Council, in the context of the credit crunch and the growing recession, believes:

That the Council should not raise council taxes, especially as the Council Tax is such a regressive tax;

that the Council should not raise charges to leaseholders for services or council rents

that council services should not be cut and indeed council spending should increase to meet the increased demand and need for council services arising out of the effects of the recession;

that the wages of council workers must at least maintain pace with inflation if council workers are to be properly rewarded for the efforts they make to deliver first class services in Tower Hamlets.

3) This Council instructs the Cabinet to draw up an emergency action plan to anticipate increasing demand on services and to ensure the council does everything possible to counter-act the effects of recession.

4) This Council calls on the Government:

To provide the funds necessary to fill any gap between income and expenditure arising out of the policies agreed in point 2;

to allow councils to do what is necessary to begin offering mortgages again to try to stimulate the housing market;

to provide and enable the funds to allow this Council to invest in the construction of council housing which will meet our pressing needs in Tower Hamlets where more than 20,000 families languish on the waiting list and where more than 12,000 families

are overcrowded and which will also boost the construction industry which is now in severe downturn and through that boost the general economy;

to rapidly investigate and bring in a more equitable form of local taxation than the Council Tax;

to return the proceeds and determination of the business rate to local councils.

### **11.6 Motion submitted by Councillor Ahmed Hussain regarding Webcasting Council committee meetings**

**Proposed: Councillor Ahmed Hussain**

**Seconded: Councillor t.b.c.**

This Council Believes:

It has a duty to involve all members of the public to access the various council committee meetings we hold in the Town Hall. However, due to the location of our Town Hall, it is extremely difficult for persons to make the strenuous journey to this remote location, particularly those with physical disabilities. Accommodation facilities are restricted to 30 persons in the public gallery although we have a growing population of approximately 200,000.

This Council further believes:

Every individual has the fundamental right to play an equal role in society, and this council must as a priority pro-actively address identified needs to ensure all persons have equal access to the work of the Council. The facility to enhance transparency through the simple cost effective process of 'web casting' meetings is achievable

This Council resolves to:

Agree to web cast Council committee meetings subject to a cost evaluation.

This Council instructs:

- (a) Officers to immediately proceed to investigate the mechanics of providing web casts of Council meetings;
- (b) Officers to provide a costing forecast for this provision to be completed before the Cabinet meeting prior to the next full Council meeting;
- (c) Democratic Services to identify these costs within their budget for the Municipal year 2009/10.

## **11.7 Motion submitted by Councillor Rania Khan regarding Gurkha Rights**

**Proposed: Councillor Rania Khan**

**Seconded: Councillor Bill Turner**

This Council notes that members of the Gurkha Brigade (Gurkhas) have played an active front line part in the British Army's activities in times of war and peace for over 200 years. In this time approximately 300,000 Gurkhas have fought alongside UK troops and 45,000 have been killed or wounded in the service of the Crown.

This Council notes that prior to a High Court ruling on 30 September 2008, only those Gurkhas who had served for at least four years and been discharged after 1 July 1997 were eligible to settle in the United Kingdom.

This Council welcomes the High Court ruling of 30 September that extends the right to settle in the UK to Gurkhas who retired before 1 July 1997.

This Council believes that following this ruling and in view of the exceptional service that Gurkhas have given to the United Kingdom that citizenship and right to remain applications from Gurkhas and their families should be processed as fast as possible.

This Council also believes that pension arrangements for members of the Gurkha Brigade should be brought into line with those of other members of Her Majesty's armed forces.

This Council, which represents one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country, believes it has a duty to ensure that members of the Gurkha Brigade should receive just and equitable treatment from Her Majesty's Government in the manner outlined above.

This Council:

- 1) Urges the MPs for Bethnal Green and Bow and Poplar and Canning Town to support Early Day Motions that seek to extend Gurkha rights;
- 2) Instructs the Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Council to write to the Local Government Association asking them to lobby the Government on this matter.
- 3) Instructs the Chief Executive to write to all other London Councils asking them to support Gurkha rights;
- 4) Instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister demanding that all retired members of the Gurkha Brigade have their applications for citizenship or right to remain processed on a fast-track basis and that they are given a fair deal on pension arrangements;
- 5) Instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary demanding that all retired members of the Gurkha Brigade have their applications for citizenship or right to remain processed on a fast-track basis and that they are given a fair deal on pension arrangements.



## **11.8 Motion submitted by Councillor Harun Miah regarding Child Poverty**

**Proposed: Councillor Harun Miah**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This Council notes:

That End Child Poverty has carried out research which shows that there are more than 42,000 children living in child poverty in Tower Hamlets;

that child poverty doubled under the 18 years of Tory misrule from 1979 to 1997;

that this Government committed itself to halving child poverty by 2010;

that Government ministers have acknowledged that whatever progress there has been in reducing child poverty, child poverty has not declined significantly in the inner London areas including Tower Hamlets;

that child poverty has been closely correlated to children having parents who are unemployed and/or dependent on benefits;

that child poverty is likely to get worse in the face of the growing economic recession;

that despite this, and thanks to the efforts of pupils, parents, teachers, the Children Services department and additional investment, End Child Poverty has also praised Tower Hamlets achievements in education.

2) This Council believes:

That the levels of child poverty in Tower Hamlets are shocking and more akin to the Victorian era than the 21<sup>st</sup> century;

that overcoming child poverty should be an urgent priority for the Council and the Government;

that there has to be a complete review of Government and Council policy with regard to child poverty to identify why it is failing to lift more children out of poverty

3) This Council resolves to draw up an urgent and radical action plan with all other relevant agencies including relevant charities which fall under the umbrella of End Child Poverty to address this scandal at the heart of our society

## **11.9 Motion submitted by Councillor Mohammed Abdul Munim regarding Policing**

**Proposed: Councillor Mohammed Abdul Munim**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This Council notes:

That the Conservative Mayor of London has brought about the resignation of Sir Ian Blair, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner;

that if Sir Ian Blair was going to resign, he should have done so after the shooting of and subsequent disinformation and misinformation about the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes;

that the Conservative Mayor demanded the resignation of Sir Ian Blair because the Mayor considered the Commissioner too liberal and not for any other reason;

that despite the problems that emerged in the leadership of Sir Ian Blair of the Metropolitan Police Service, this Council supports the general thrust of his initiatives in the areas of diversity and community policing;

that the problem with the diversity and community policing initiatives did not go far enough under Sir Ian Blair.

2) This Council deplores the way in which Sir Ian Blair has been forced to resign by the Mayor of London.

3) This Council fears that the resignation of Sir Ian Blair in these circumstances threatens to undermine the positive initiatives that were introduced by Sir Ian Blair.

4) This Council believes:

That investment in the Safer Neighbourhood Team system should be extended rather than reduced with more resources being put in to ensure that SNT members are available at the times that Tower Hamlets residents and others need them to deal with the crimes that can blight their lives;

that the Metropolitan Police remains unreflective of the communities which the police are supposed to serve, especially but not only at senior management level;

that much more needs to be done to overcome the unrepresentative nature of the police if confidence in the police is to be raised amongst significant sections of the community.

## **11.10 Motion submitted by Councillor Mamun Rashid regarding Tarling Estate**

**Proposed: Councillor Mamun Rashid**

**Seconded: Councillor Abjol Miah**

1) This Council notes that the community and community representatives on Tarling Estate believe they need a community centre for which there is a funding gap of some £400,000.

2) This Council believes that council officers must do everything possible to help find the money to bridge this funding gap so the people on the Tarling Estate get the facilities they need and deserve.