

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 20 September 2017	
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motions submitted by Members of the Council	

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

SUMMARY

1. Nineteen motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 20 September 2017.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 21st 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 the future of the Tower Hamlets Youth Service

Proposer: Councillor Gulam Robbani

Seconded: Councillor Oliur Rahman

This Council notes that:

1. Former Mayor Lutfur Rahman had a positive vision for the Youth Service which was expressed, for example, at the Cabinet in April 2012:

“He considered that what really mattered were the young people of Tower Hamlets who represented the future of the Borough and that youth services were provided that benefited them. It was his intention as Mayor that young people in Tower Hamlets received the best youth services and best education possible.”

2. That the main motivations of bringing the Youth Service back in-house were:
 - to save money on duplicating management functions and re-invest it in the front line of the service;
 - to respond to the Government’s localism agenda;
 - to strengthen the Council’s partnership agenda;
 - to obtain extra value by, for example, the youth service working effectively.
3. That although bringing the Service back in-house was a decision of the Executive Mayor, councillors were able to discuss the transfer openly within Council structures – for example, Councillor Oliur Rahman was able to explain the decision to the April meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at which Councillor Rachael Saunders declared a personal interest on this item as she had “been in receipt of information from some of the service providers managing the contract in question.”

This Council further notes that:

1. The current Mayor’s intention to make a fundamental change in the way that the Youth Service is run (initially on an interim basis) was not mentioned at the Cabinet on 10th May 2016, although planning must have been well underway by then.
2. The Mayor’s intention to make this fundamental change was set out in a briefing paper from the Mayor’s office dated 12th May 2016 which was circulated to all councillors.
3. This paper stated that the interim delivery plan would begin in July, which clearly precludes any wider member involvement (indeed, the paper refers to the decision having been developed in discussion with John Biggs and Councillor Saunders) and a future delivery model will be in place from April 2017 (and there will be full member involvement in options for this model, but how this will happen is not explained).
4. This paper also stated that a gap analysis is underway with a view to there being a programme of procurement and commissioning in June 2016 targeted at local third sector organisations.

5. This paper also states that it is the intention to offer youth services for the rest of this financial year from only eight venues in the borough – despite the fact that youth are often very reluctant to travel far to a formal provision. The paper states that the Council intends to offer an outreach service to encourage you to travel to the formal provision and also to rely, in the interim, on whatever additional services are provided in an un-co-ordinated manner by local charities or voluntary organisations.

This Council further notes that:

1. The Mayor's decision was revealed at the Council's Annual Meeting on 18th May 2016 by Councillor Rachael Saunders in what appeared to be an unplanned announcement. This included Councillor Saunders reading out an email from her mobile phone but not saying who had sent her the email (in sad contrast to her previous openness about who was briefing her).
2. Councillor Saunders stated that "The service has faced allegations of fraud and corruption" and other serious allegations. She also said that "Investigations into these serious allegations are ongoing," and that the Youth Service does not have the capacity to deliver as much as it has in the past. She stated that "we" were working out a service plan which would be based on reduced capacity and on when that had been developed would consideration be given to identifying and filling gaps. She expected the identification of gaps to be finished by June (a couple of weeks after she was speaking) – but did not mention John Biggs's intention to fill these gaps by contracting out parts of the service to third sector organisations (or who, in the event of this being done, would manage these organisations).
3. The Council Communications Office issued a press release on 26th May referring to the change only having been prompted by "historic shortcoming". This announced that an interim delivery model would be adopted "by the summer". It gave details of the interim delivery model and stated that young people's views had been listened to throughout the review process. (The members have yet to see a concrete tangible and evidence of that)
4. There have been a number of reports in the local press since the Council AGM which have reported the detail of various allegations – presumably either on the basis of their own imaginations or on the basis of briefings from unknown parties in the Council which have not been shared with all councillors.
5. That as a result of the way the Mayor and relevant Cabinet Members have dealt with this issue, it is entirely unclear what is happening to the youth service – which has led to a great deal of serious concern among service users and in the wider community.

This Council believes that:

1. If and when there are allegations of corruption or other serious malpractice, these should be investigated in accordance with Council procedures and individuals should be dealt with appropriately. (Independent Group fully supports this approach and have publicly offered to work together for the benefit of young people of Tower Hamlets).
2. That if a service is to be reviewed in order to spend or save money by cutting certain provisions, and/or deliver the service more efficiently or effectively, this

should be discussed openly, including with councillors and services users and the wider community rather than playing politics or blame-game.

3. (1) and (2) above should not be confused.

This Council further believes that:

1. The current position, in which the Administration appears to have responded to allegations against individuals by pre-emptively altering the service as a whole, and in which the Youth Service is to be run on an interim delivery model based on reduced capacity and enhanced by some sort of ad-hoc procurement, is ill thought out and poorly planned.
2. The interim service delivery model will, for the rest of this financial year, lead to an increase in Anti-Social Behaviour across the Borough – to the irritation of the whole community, for whom this is already a massive problem.
3. The interim service delivery model will, for the rest of this financial year, incur a risk of extra spending on management and quality assurance of the service – risks which have not been addressed in the little documentation available or in such public statements as have emerged.

This Council resolves that:

1. The current Mayor, John Biggs, should honour his commitment to govern in a transparent manner and he should put on the public record a full account of what has been going on, including what allegations have been made, when these were made, by whom and how - and critically how these are being investigated (releasing as much information as is possible without compromising the investigations or the individuals concerned); what prompted the service review and how it took place; and what his intentions are towards the service.
2. The current Mayor, John Biggs, to immediately stop any further work to drastically reduce and cut the Youth Service provision in the name of interim delivery model and engage in a serious, open, transparent consultation with the young people, residents and stakeholders.
3. The current Mayor, John Biggs, to reverse the decision to close unprecedented number of Youth Centres and look for an alternative way to provide effective, efficient and fit-for-purpose Borough-wide localised youth service provision.
4. The current Mayor, John Biggs, must keep the Youth Service in-house rather than privatising or contracting it out.
5. In the event that the current Mayor, John Biggs, should not agree to do think again, he must issue a statement clarifying how he intends to procure a service to fill in the gaps from the third sector, given that the Commissioners have been running grant-making functions; and he must also issue a comprehensive statement covering which of his chosen eight venues will pick up delivering the service previously provided by centres which John Biggs and Councillor Saunders have closed and how service users whose centres have been closed are expected to access the replacement services, including details of travel arrangements, etc.

12.2 Motion regarding the recently reported Child AB in Foster Care

Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood

Seconded: Councillor Chris Chapman

[Note – please also see the Appendix for background information on this motion.]

The Council notes:

This Council first notes the following Acts of Parliament and Regulations which are the statutory requirements for cases like this.

- 1) Children Act 1989 (c. 41) Part III – SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PROVIDED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND
- 2) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

That the following is also relevant;

- 3) United Nations - Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990
- 4) The Children and Families Act 2014

This Council also notes the articles written by Andrew Norfolk, the Chief Investigative Reporter for The Times newspaper published between August 28th and 30th.

In addition, on the 29th August Judge HHJ Sapnara released a Case Management Report

Andrew Norfolk, The Times reporter was instrumental in the exposure of the Rotherham sex abuse scandal for which we won awards including Journalist of the Year.

In summary, these are the allegations made in the newspaper reports;

- Arabic routinely spoken at home of first carer which the child did not understand
- a necklace containing a cross was removed by the carer and not returned
- Child regularly expected to eat meals on the floor
- Child encouraged to learn Arabic, child told mother that she needs to ask her social worker if she can learn Arabic
- "The social services employee heard the child whispering Arabic words to her mother that she was allegedly told must be said aloud to ensure that "when you die you go to heaven".
- Both foster families, the women concealed their faces when outside
- Not allowed to eat pork (her birth mother had cooked her Carbonara with pork to take home)
- Child allegedly told 'Christmas and Easter are stupid'
- Child allegedly told 'European women are stupid and alcoholic'
- Girl was distressed at the end of each meeting
- Both foster families were practising Muslims
- That the child expressed a clear wish not to return to the foster family in reports seen by the Council

This Council further notes

That OFSTED failed Tower Hamlets Children's Services earlier this year and that these events started in between the inspection in late January and early February and the publication of their report on the 7th April. The OFSTED report starts with these sentences;

"There are widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children who need help and protection in Tower Hamlets. As a result, too many children remain in situations of actual or potential harm for too long. Insufficient scrutiny by the chief executive, the director of children's services (DCS) and politicians has meant that they did not know about the extent of the failures to protect children until this inspection."

We are concerned that while the OFSTED identified more than 25 cases where OFSTED had to intervene to ensure children were safe they were only here for three weeks and their primary objective was to write a report on Tower Hamlets not to check that every single child was safe.

This Council remains deeply concerned that the actions of Children's Services may have resulted in harm to other children which has not yet been uncovered and that children are still suffering.

This Council is disappointed in that the first response of the Council was to ask Councillors to be *'united at expressing our anger at the implicit and in some cases explicit Islamophobia of the articles written.'* Email to Councillors 29th August. Anger is not the appropriate response to a serious and complex issue like this.

The Council has a statutory duty to children and that by trying to create an emotional response to reporting based on internal Council documents it does not serve the interests of children under its care.

This Council is further disappointed that the Council's public statement refers to only one set of foster parents when both the Court papers and newspaper articles refer to two sets of foster parents. Which is which?

"For example, the child was in fact fostered by an English speaking family of mixed race."

This Council believes

That the publication of the Times photographs even though cropped, pixelated and from the rear were inappropriate and that the use of models could have conveyed the information they wished to provide.

This Council has the following question;

Did Tower Hamlets Council observe an Act of Parliament which says

- (5) *In making any such decision a local authority shall give due consideration—*
- a) *having regard to his age and understanding, to such wishes and feelings of the child as they have been able to ascertain;*
 - b) *to such wishes and feelings of any person mentioned in subsection (4)(b) to(d) as they have been able to ascertain; and*
 - c) *to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.*

This Council proposes;

We have submitted twenty-seven detailed questions to the Council, the answers to which we expect after the deadline for motions so as an interim measure we propose the following while we wait for answers;

- a) The Council appoint an independent expert to investigate individual cases like this. Based on what Rotherham Council did in 2013 when they appointed Professor Alexis Jay as an independent expert to investigate issues there.
- b) We also call on the Council ask the independent expert to investigate other cases which will be identified through a campaign of contact with parents, LBTH and school staff recommendations (in confidence), OFSTED reports and recommendations by Councillors
- c) That the Council make available (redacted where necessary) the statement provided to the Court, requested on the 27th June on the cultural appropriateness of the foster care placement and any subsequent updates
- d) To review all current fostering arrangements to ensure that all fostering arrangements match the requirements laid down by law and to categorise where they are not by indicating on the grounds of religion, culture, race and linguistic where they do not match in summary format
- e) That if not enough foster parents are available to provide all our children with the appropriate matches that a public campaign be launched to recruit more foster carers
- f) That any evidence of proselytising by any carer should result in their removal from register of approved foster parents. Similarly, any foster families where English is not the dominant home language unless the child's main language is not English.

12.3 Motion regarding Tower Hamlets Rent Control in the Private Rented Sector

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

Secunder: Councillor Abdul Asad

The Council Notes;

1. The 2011 census revealed there were 67,209 **private sector** homes in **Tower Hamlets**; 41,670 (62%) of these were in the **private rented sector**.
2. The **Private rented sector** is now the largest tenure in the borough with 39% of the housing stock, far higher than the London average of 25%.
3. Lower quartile rents in the borough are £365 per week for a two bedroom and £462 for a three bedroom flat. The weekly Local Housing Allowance rate for a family needing two bedrooms is £302.33, and for three bedrooms it is £354.46.
4. The median rent for a room in a Tower Hamlets shared flat or House in Multiple Occupation is £147 per week. Single people under 35 have a weekly Local Housing Allowance of £102.99.
5. Median rents have increased by around a quarter in the last five years, to £1430 pcm (£330 pw) for one bedroom and £1750 pcm (£403.85 pw) for two bedroom flats. As of 2013, nearly half of all households in Tower Hamlets have an annual income less than £30,000.
6. Shelter said; "For many people the private rented sector is not a tenure of choice, but a tenure of necessity. The high cost of buying a home and the shortage of social housing means many families have no choice but to rent privately for the medium to long term".

The Council further notes;

1. The standard of living in the private rented sector is poor and hugely substandard cited from research by Shelter and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
2. About 40 per cent of the income of private renters – who now outnumber those renting social housing – goes on rent. This unsustainably high percentage helps to explain why the proportion of housing benefit paid to the private sector is rocketing upwards, from 25 per cent 10 years ago to 40 per cent today.

The Council welcomes;

1. The 2013 tribunal judgement in favour of a private tenant in Chapman House who had been subjected to a revenge eviction after reporting unacceptable living conditions to the ward councillor.
2. The council's work on Chapman House since that case, including extensive visits from Environmental Health Officers, including two who worked very hard to compile a comprehensive report on the fire, risks and hazards arising from the substandard quality of housing in the block between 2013 and 2015.
3. The 20 Improvement Notices and 8 Prohibition Notices that the council has issued in respect of this block, having found that the landlord had breached building regulations (whilst noting that the landlord has continued to increase the rent for tenants of this unsafe housing despite not having complied with the notices and addressing the breach of regulations.
4. The landlord has cladded the building but did not submit a statutory notice to the Local Authority Building Control, under The Building Regulations 2010 (Amended) prior to cladding the building.

5. A poll commissioned for the campaigning organisation Generation Rent showing about 60 per cent of respondents back some form of rent control.

The Council Resolves;

1. To research, develop and introduce a Tower Hamlets policy for more secure tenancy agreements for private tenants, including stabilising rent controls to prevent landlords raising rents each year by more than an inflationary index
2. To research, develop and introduce a Tower Hamlets Policy to make three year tenancies in the private rented sector standard across the sector, with rent caps linked to inflation, the standard of the private dwelling and whether the landlord is compliant with EHO Notices.
3. If the Landlord of Chapman House fails to address the outstanding notices and breach of building regulation notices that have been served on him to seek prosecution.
4. *To uses its powers under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to tackle problems created by rogue landlords. A Rent Repayment Order, for example, can be issued to a landlord, requiring him or her to repay rent (up to a year in some cases) to a tenant.*
5. To use its power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices of up to £30,000 if a landlord does not comply with the terms of an Improvement Notice.
6. Engage with the best landlords to encourage self-regulation; recognising that the most responsible landlords have an interest in promoting better standards to raise the standing of the whole sector and avoid the need for further regulation, local authorities should better incentivise landlord 'PRS Champions' to work closely in partnership with the council and the wider landlord community.

12.4 Motion in support of foster carers

Proposer: Mayor John Biggs

Seconded: Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs

This Council notes:

1. The story first published in The Times newspaper concerning a child in a Tower Hamlets foster placement, which has seen significant media attention in the UK and internationally.
2. The unprecedented publication of the court report confirms that while foster placements will always require judgement and will rarely achieve a perfect fit, the judgement of our officers was sensitive and makes clear The Times' reporting was intrusive to both the child and her foster family.
3. That many foster carers feel their work and value have been questioned and undermined as a result of negative media coverage.
4. That immediately following the publication of the Times article Mayor Biggs and Cllr Whitelock Gibbs met with a group of concerned foster carers.

This Council believes:

1. The media's portrayal of foster carers is deeply misguided and harmful to the recruitment and retention of carers.
2. That foster carers are dedicated individuals, who work tirelessly and provide the highest levels of care and support for some of our most vulnerable young people.
3. That child protection and safeguarding is a complex area but this nuance and sensitivity has been lost in the distorted and sensationalist media coverage.
4. The reporting in the Times article and its reinterpretation by other media showed a crude and judgemental stereotyping which many will see as being Islamophobic, by attaching prejudices and implied motives and using intrusively stereotyped views of a foster carer who happened to be of Muslim faith.
5. Foster carers deserve to feel safe, supported and valued.

This Council welcomes:

1. The caution exercised by the political and corporate leadership in engaging with the public debate, to protect the safety and identity of the child first and foremost.
2. The public statements from Mayor John Biggs in support of our foster carers and calling out the Islamophobic tone of much of the media coverage.

This Council resolves:

1. To welcome the work Mayor John Biggs and the Lead Member, Cllr Whitelock Gibbs, have undertaken to show support for our foster carers.

2. To continue to support foster carers in their vital work and to work with them to promote the positive difference they make in our borough and to our young people.

12.5 Motion regarding Housing Achievements in Tower Hamlets – setting the record straight

Proposer: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

Seconded: Councillor Maium Miah

The Council Notes:

It has become more difficult than any time before for people in inner City boroughs like Tower Hamlets to find a decent home to rent or buy. Today many essential workers; teachers, nurses, fire fighters and other public service workers find it nearly impossible to buy or rent in Tower Hamlets.

The former Mayor Lutfur Rahman's administration embarked on an ambitious journey to tackle the housing issues locally in a two-prong strategy:

1. Building affordable houses in Tower Hamlets; and
2. Improving the standard for private properties.

For example, to deal with the poor standards of maintenance and upkeep within the private sector, then Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his Deputy Mayor Ohid Ahmed introduced 'licensing for private rented sector housing' under the Housing Act 2004.

The achievements of the Rahman Mayoral policies and the leadership between 2010 and 2015 were recognised by people and commentators across the UK. With Cllr. Ohid Ahmed he also led building the highest number of affordable homes in the country. Figures released by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) showed that between 2010/11 and 2015, Tower Hamlets delivered a record 5,590 affordable homes.

In addition, as Cabinet Lead Member for Regeneration, Cllr Ohid Ahmed led two major regeneration programmes, Ocean Estate and Blackwall Reach.

The Independent Group's success under the leadership of former Mayor Lutfur Rahman, his Deputy, Cllr Ohid Ahmed, and his team was further acknowledged by the Government, who released £24.2 million in 2015 alone from the 'New Homes Bonus' scheme, which has enabled the current administration to continue that legacy of our housing delivery. By 2015, the council had secured the total of £53m in New Homes Bonus - the highest in the country.

A recent City Hall report further acknowledged our administration's achievement that Tower Hamlets had built more affordable housing than anywhere else in the capital.

There were other regeneration projects – approved by the previous administration - for example 148 homes in Watts Grove with £26.33m funding approved by Mayor Lutfur Rahman on 5 November 2014. The London Docks regeneration project not only secured invaluable affordable housing but also a space for a 1,500 spaces strong secondary school in Wapping.

The Whitechapel Vision along with its Master Plan was the brainchild of the former Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his then Cabinet Member Alibor Choudhury. Both were approved by the previous administration and adopted by the Council. This historic regeneration of

Whitechapel is the former administration's hard work and a testament to their commitment and ambition to improve the Borough which included local businesses, the agreed 'tech city' and the expansion of medical research facilities.

The Whitechapel Vision, its Master Plan and including associated regeneration will also provide:

- At least 3,500 new homes
- 5,000 new local jobs
- School improvements
- Transformed public spaces
- Enhanced local heritage
- A civic centre in the heart of the community

We have proposed a 'local community-led forum of grass-root stakeholders' to add value to get it right in the implementation phase which has been ignored by John Biggs.

The Council Believes:

John Biggs, his allies, and other opportunists have sought to take credit for what Mayor Lutfur Rahman, his Deputy Ohid Ahmed, former Cabinet member Alibor Choudhury and other cabinet members worked hard to deliver for residents.

John Biggs promised to build a thousand more houses in his manifesto, in reality he has built none save to carry on Lutfur Rahman's commitments as this was tied to the projects previously started and the funding previously secured and approved by us.

In the 2014 mayoral election, the previous administration had a manifesto promise to deliver further 5,000 affordable housing for the next 4 years by 2018. Indeed, on top of the 5,590 homes already delivered by the previous administration, another 3,000 affordable homes were in the pipeline and were well on course to be delivered as the previous administration's manifesto promise of additional 5,000 local homes. It's disingenuous for John Biggs to take credit for affordable housing in Tower Hamlets in which his administration had no contribution.

Our administration had a clear vision and drive to deliver more social affordable housing in the borough to alleviate overcrowding and increase life chances of our young people. A vision and drive we fail to see in John Biggs administration. There are no new council or affordable homes built between June 2015 until now 'which were not started or approved by our previous administration under former Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his Deputy Mayor'.

John Biggs has yet to credibly name one big regeneration project which he has initiated and approved which will deliver substantial affordable housing but as usual, he tries to take credit for the success of our hard work.

The Council Resolves:

John Biggs should stop taking the credit for former Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Deputy Mayor Cllr Ohid Ahmed's achievements and learn to take responsibility for the series of catastrophic failures he has committed and to stop blaming anyone but him for easy political point scoring.

To acknowledge the historic achievements of the former Mayor, Deputy Mayor and their administration in delivering the record level of affordable housing as acknowledged by DCLG, the GLA and others.

12.6 Motion regarding the Greenwich and Woolwich Foot Tunnels

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor Andrew Wood

This Council notes that the Royal Borough of Greenwich has voted to approve changes to the Bye Laws relating to the Greenwich and Woolwich Foot Tunnels which it has administered since 1986.

The Council further notes:

That such changes will only come into operation when approved by both the Council's of Newham and Tower Hamlets and the Secretary of State.

That whereas most of the amendments may be considered as updating bye laws which have remained unchanged for almost eighty years, that which relates to permitting cycling in the tunnel is a complete change.

That the Report to the Cabinet of the Royal Borough of Greenwich stated; "No consultation on the proposals has been undertaken, or considered necessary. The Friends of Greenwich and Woolwich Foot Tunnels are aware of the proposals."

That the Report to the Cabinet of the Royal Borough of Greenwich also stated;

"That with regard to Community Safety there are no significant implications arising from this Report."

"That with regard to Health and Safety there are no significant implications arising from this report."

"That with regard to Health and Wellbeing there are no significant implications arising from this Report."

That the Department of Transport guidance on shared facilities states:

"Converting a footway or footpath to allow use by cyclists should only be done after a rigorous assessment has been carried out. It is vital to ascertain whether it is the best option or not. This can only be done after all on-road solutions have been fully considered and rejected as unsuitable. If so, the conversion must be carefully designed to meet the needs, as far as is practicable, of all its intended users."

That it is obvious that no assessment, let alone a rigorous assessment, has been undertaken by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

That the tunnel is designated as a foot tunnel.

That there is YouTube evidence of a Deliveroo driver on a moped has been riding through the tunnel and that motorised scooters and motorised unicycles have also been seen used.

That residents of Tower Hamlets are concerned about the safety implications of cyclists riding through the tunnel, which is extremely narrow in places and completely unsuited to joint usage by cyclists and pedestrians. Many residents have said they will no longer use the tunnel especially at rush hour.

The Council resolves to undertake a rigorous and impartial assessment as to Health and Safety implications of any change and the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and fully consult the community before approving any changes to the byelaws relating to cycling in the foot tunnel.

12.7 Motion to Keep Tower Hamlets Current Parking Operating Times

Proposer: Cllr Shah Alam
Seconder: Cllr Aminur Khan

The Council Notes:

1. The Council document titled "Proposed Operational Hours" effecting parking should change in the Bow and Mile End areas (parking zones B1, B2 and B4).
2. The options offered for consideration affecting residents and businesses include the following;
 - Option 1: Monday - Saturday 7.30am to 10pm and Sunday 11am to 4pm
 - Option 2: Monday - Saturday 8.30am to 10pm and Sunday 10am to 10pm
 - Option 3: Monday - Sunday 8.30am to 10pm
3. The consultation did not include an option to keep current operating parking times of 8.30am till 5.30pm Monday and Friday.
4. The consultation is misleading and **disingenuous**.
5. By choosing between three slightly different variations, the Council is trying to get the public to endorse the whole approach.

The Council resolves;

1. To include and retain the current operating parking times of 8.30am till 5.30pm Monday and Friday until genuine consultation has taken place
2. To consult effectively and widely with a new consultation document for residents, businesses and local business holders to respond - and include current operating parking times of 8.30am till 5.30pm Monday and Friday.
3. Stop the backdoor change to the current operating parking times.

12.8 Motion regarding housing in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Sirajul Islam
Seconder: Councillor Rachel Blake

This Council notes that:

1. The population of Tower Hamlets broke through the 300,000 mark last year. It is predicted there will be a further 87,400 people living in the Borough over the next 25 years.
2. A lack of affordable housing is now the main concern for residents, as highlighted by the Annual Residents Survey 2017.
3. The new Local Plan will set out how the Council intends to manage the scale and pace of development and ensure that all residents benefit from the opportunities growth brings to the borough and will deliver more schools, transport, GP surgeries and jobs alongside new housing.
4. Mayor Biggs pledged to deliver 1,000 council homes and the Council is on track to meet this target.
5. Council figures show Tower Hamlets delivered 1,070 affordable homes last year (2016/17) and another 1,073 the year before (2015/16).
6. Under Mayor Biggs' new Living Rent policy, rents for new affordable homes are far more affordable to those on low incomes, saving residents up to £6,000 a year. This was a recommendation of the Tower Hamlets Affordability Commission, which was set up by Mayor Biggs last year.
7. That Mayor Biggs unveiled 148 new council homes at Watts Grove this month; a scheme which was scrapped in 2013 by the previous administration but reinstated after a local Labour-led campaign to save the housing. The housing is covered by new rent levels, introduced by Mayor Biggs, which means that compared to the previous Mayor's rent levels, a family living in a new three bed property will be up to £5,791 better off.
8. The Mayor's Neighbourhood Refresh scheme will invest £3million in local neighbourhoods to make them safer, cleaner and greener. Practical improvements such as new lighting, more green space, traffic calming and new bins will make a positive difference to local areas.
9. The rights of private renters in Tower Hamlets are being protected with the launch of the Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter. This, alongside innovative new measures such as the landlord licensing scheme, means a better deal for private renters.
10. Families are no longer housed in B&B accommodation for longer than the 6 week legal limit, compared to the 174 families that were left to languish in B&Bs under the previous administration.
11. The Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which ensures transparency in the planning process and encourages reviewing viability at each phase of large schemes, aims to provide greater clarity to both applicants

and the public and ensures that the principles of sustainable development are at the forefront of decision-making in Tower Hamlets.

This Council believes:

1. Population growth will bring Tower Hamlets numerous benefits as well as challenges.
2. The Borough benefits from the approach of this Council administration which is meeting the challenge of the housing crisis head on by providing high quality affordable housing, a better deal for private renters, improved local environments and 1,000 council homes.
3. The 174 families left to live in B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks, and their original decision to scrap the Watts Grove development, illustrates the approach of the previous administration: a failure to serve residents; a failure to properly manage council budgets; and a failure to plan for the future.

This Council resolves:

1. To work with Mayor John Biggs to continue to deliver more affordable housing for local people.

12.9 Motion regarding Stop closure of one stop shops in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Cllr Suluk Ahmed

Seconder: Cllr Oliur Rahman

The Council Notes:

John Biggs led Tower Hamlets administration is planning to shut down four One Stop Shops in their current form which provide invaluable services to many residents, including friends, family members and loved ones. This is being disguised as a “merger”.

The reason or ‘excuse’ given is the integration of the service with the Idea Stores and forcing the residents to use online services instead.

To force the service online will alienate the elderly, those who do not use a computer, find reading a challenge, have special needs or for whom the first language is not English.

This means there will no longer be ‘immediate’ face to face service in its current form about parking, housing benefits, council tax, welfare etc. for the residents in stand-alone One Stop Shops with face to face contact providing expert knowledge and support to help residents – many of whom would be vulnerable in a distressed situation or in need of ‘urgent’ help.

There is a genuine fear that the face to face service will completely disappear even if any ‘temporary stop-gap-measures’ or ‘a provisional promise’ to see complicated cases at a future date was made to some users to get the changes approved now in order to ‘manage’ any protest or to negate the complaints from the residents/users, staff, elected representatives and others. The ‘if needed’ assistance and a possible face to face meetings in complicated cases at a ‘future’ date leave a lot to be desired and are meaningless rhetoric for residents who need immediate face to face help.

Independent Group’s Shadow Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Partnerships, Cllr Ohid Ahmed, has raised this important issue and is campaigning to save the service. If approved this proposal will mean there will no longer be any stand-alone One Stop Shops with immediate face to face service using ‘ticket and wait’ provision currently in place in the borough.

It is also important to ensure that the Council does not allow the new wifi service to provide an opportunity for hackers and others in respect of data breaches and access to confidential information.

Approximately 1,000 residents visit the One Stop Shops services on daily basis – many of whom are from the ethnic minorities or the most vulnerable groups due to a variety of factors.

The Council Resolves:

To ask Mayor John Biggs to stop his proposed cut and closure of four One Stops Shops in Tower Hamlets due to its detrimental impact on residents who already feel besieged by his brutal cuts as well as a record 9% increase in the council tax while the Mayor enjoys an 11.7% pay rise at more than £10,000 extra in his pay packet.

12.10 Motion OFSTED School inspection results over time

Proposer: Councillor Julia Dockerill
Seconder: Councillor Andrew Wood

This Council notes that;

That OFSTED provide a snapshot every year of the relative performance of schools across the country. It is based on OFSTED school inspection results aggregated by region, local authority and constituency. That school inspections inspect the school and not pupils or their results but school management and teaching,

The table shows where Tower Hamlets fits in relative to other London boroughs for local authority maintained schools.

As can be seen Tower Hamlets schools are no longer the best in the country nor even the best in London despite receiving the highest funding per pupil in the country.

As can be seen many of our neighbours rank more highly than us especially at the primary school level.

	Rank August 2012	Rank August 2014	Rank March 2017	Boroughs which rate more highly – neighbours only
Primary – Tower Hamlets total	19 th	12 th	18 th	Hackney, Lewisham, Greenwich, Lewisham
Secondary – Tower Hamlets total	12 th	12 th	19 th	Southwark, Hackney
All schools – Tower Hamlets	15 th	7 th	15 th	Hackney

Our nurseries and special schools rank very highly offsetting weaknesses at primary and secondary level.

The Council further notes;

That this issue has been raised twice in full Council in the last three years and that no investigation or action has taken place. The result continuing relative decline.

This Council further notes that while the OFSTED Children's Services inspection did not inspect schools nor their management it did have this to say

“Insufficient scrutiny by the chief executive, the director of children's services (DCS) and politicians has meant that they did not know about the extent of the failures”

The Council calls on the Mayor to;

1. Scrutinise the OFSTED inspection results and to get an understanding of why other Boroughs seem to be doing better
2. To investigate the reasons for the relative decline over the last few years

3. To investigate why the highest per pupil funding in the country has not helped achieve better results given that similarly deprived boroughs with much less funding per pupil seem to do as well as or better than us.

This information is publicly available here

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/ofsted#!/vizhome/Dataview/Viewregionalperformanceovertime>

Select Explore national, regional and local data

Then Phase – Primary, Secondary or All

Then Provider Type – Local Authority maintained

Then select Percentage of Place/Learners

Split Outstanding and Good

Region click on London

Select ‘Showing local authority area’

Sort areas by “Overall effectiveness”

Change date as required

12.11 Motion regarding Tower Hamlets Communities to shape neighbourhoods and council services in decision making NOT an Individual Mayoral Decision outside of Cabinet of £3.5 million contract to consultants to transform our services and communities

Proposer: Councillor Aminur Khan

Seconder: Councillor Abdul Asad

The Council Notes:

1. It has developed a new strategy to encourage local communities to play a bigger and more active role in shaping their neighbourhoods and council services.
2. A wide programme of consultation was done with key stakeholders to develop the current priorities in the strategy, and to help define the council's vision for involving the community and consultation closed on 5th September 2017
3. **Labour Mayor Biggs said:** "I want our council to draw on all the talent and experience of our community and to include more local people in our decision making. With government continuing to cut council funding each year it's more important than ever that residents are at the heart of everything we do. Working together to identify local priorities and develop solutions to the challenges we face is vital."
4. A number of campaigners, community groups and organisations have addressed the council following Mayor Biggs's cuts to frontline services providing talent and experience of how decisions could be made without impacting on the children, young people, families, working people, the elderly, disabled and vulnerable.
5. Mayor Biggs has not listened and included local communities in his decision making but instead made a £3.5 million Mayoral Decision on the 18th August 2017 to provide a contract to Grant Thornton Consortia as the strategic partner to transform the council services effecting Tower Hamlets communities.
6. Mayor Biggs chose not to make Tower Hamlets residents his strategic partner.

The Council resolves;

1. To stop the privatisation of council nurseries.
2. Increase the number of Youth Centres per ward to deliver a comprehensive plan of detached and outreach work.
3. Reinstate all council funded Police Officers cut by Mayor John Biggs.
4. Fund the Tower Hamlets Youth Sports Foundation with the council working in partnership with the THYSF Business Plan.
5. Fund the Careers Service adequately so that young people aged 16-17 can be supported into higher and education and employment.
6. Hold a Public Inquiry by Overview and Scrutiny to hear from all parties affected by the damning Ofsted report.
7. To introduce Rent Control in the Private Rented Sector.
8. The closed decision of Mayor John Biggs to sign off £3.5 million to a private contractor will need to be made accountable to the communities in Tower Hamlets.

12.12 Labour Group Motion on NJC Pay

Proposer: Councillor Rachel Blake
Seconder: Councillor Danny Hassell

This Council notes that:

1. NJC basic pay has fallen by 21% since 2010 in real terms
2. NJC workers had a three-year pay freeze from 2010-2012
3. Local terms and conditions of many NJC employees have also been cut, impacting on their overall earnings
4. NJC pay is the lowest in the public sector
5. Job evaluated pay structures are being squeezed and distorted by bottom-loaded NJC pay settlements needed to reflect the increased National Living Wage and the Foundation Living Wage
6. There are growing equal and fair pay risks resulting from this situation

This Council therefore supports the NJC pay claim for 2018, submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers and calls for the immediate end of public sector pay restraint. NJC pay cannot be allowed to fall further behind other parts of the public sector. This council also welcomes the joint review of the NJC pay spine to remedy the turbulence caused by bottom-loaded pay settlements.

This Council also notes the drastic ongoing cuts to local government funding and calls on the Government to provide additional funding to fund a decent pay rise for NJC employees and the pay spine review.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Call immediately on the LGA to make urgent representations to Government to fund the NJC claim and the pay spine review and notify us of their action in this regard;
2. Call on the Mayor to write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor supporting the NJC pay claim and seeking additional funding to fund a decent pay rise and the pay spine review;
3. Call on the Mayor to meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and the pay spine review.

12.13 Independent group motion Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets for Residents

Proposer: Councillor Kibria Choudhury

Secunder: Councillor Md. Maium Miah

The Council notes:

Prime Minister Theresa May has admitted in the Parliament that there are other buildings with 'combustible' cladding - like Grenfell Tower - across the country. She stated that that the Department for Communities and Local Government will inform the relevant local authorities and checks were being carried out.

The fire in Grenfell Tower in London was a national tragedy - with 80 people presumed dead but the accurate figure is likely to be more - to widespread public anger, dismay and a national search for answers. They all should have been safe when they went to sleep at night. In the 21st century Britain, one of the richest countries in the world, in the richest city in the country, nobody should be living in a home that risks their life.

It's heartbreaking when you consider that this devastating fire was eminently avoidable. The allegedly unnecessary cost cutting measures by Kensington and Chelsea (K&C) Council or its agencies to reportedly save £5,000 by installing cheaper but more flammable cladding and non-existence of sprinklers did not help the poor people, which included very young children, who were trapped and died in the fire. This becomes even more devastating when you consider the fact that the K&C Council is sitting on a shocking £209 million reserves in their coffers – surplus to their requirements, and offered a £100 council tax rebate to residents just before the local election in 2014.

The Chief Executive, Leader and Deputy Leader have of K&C council had to resign from their positions after initial reluctance. The Government is being urged to send commissioners to the K&C council.

The Boss - Director of Grenfell Tower insulation provider - 'is government adviser'. Technical director of Saint Gobain UK, which makes Celotex insulation, is reportedly also on the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC), which advises Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

In Tower Hamlets, we have many similar towers and residents are genuinely worried and have concerns. We have seen many fires in Tower Hamlets in recent weeks with many families evacuated.

On 3 July, a young teenage girl – 17 years old – tragically died after trying to escape a burning fire in her home in Mile End, with 50 people evacuated and four suffering smoke inhalations. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and loved ones, as well as all the victims and loved ones of Grenfell Tower and other fires in the capital.

A large blaze tore through the roof of a multi-million-pound development next to Regent's Canal, Bow Wharf in Tower Hamlets where eighty firefighters were dispatched to tackle the fire at the five-storey building in Bow Wharf, Wennington Road – luckily no one was yet living in the building.

Following Grenfell fire tragedy, John Biggs issued a statement citing Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), Council's Arms-length Housing provider, about the Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) of its THH managed tower blocks in the Borough but has failed to publish the FRAs despite requests by the residents and the Independent Group.

John Biggs has yet to confirm the final details about the safety of the buildings and towers managed by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private landlords.

Labour administration in Tower Hamlets sold off the family silver – our social housing stock – to private companies or RSLs – so John Biggs cannot simply absolve himself of his utmost responsibility of keeping all our residents safe in light of the tragedy that befell on the poor people of Grenfell Tower in west London at night.

Independent Group in London Borough of Tower Hamlets had officially written to John Biggs highlighting the concerns and asking for reassurance and specific answers for residents, still awaiting a reply.

The Council believes:

Everyone deserves to know if their home is safe when they go to sleep at night.

All Landlords - including local authorities, RSLs, Arm's Length Housing Management Organisations (ALMOs) like THH and private landlords - have a legal obligation to provide safe and secure buildings for our residents and where they cannot do so they must provide alternative accommodation.

People need assurance and answers and Biggs must ensure that 'all' our buildings in Tower Hamlets are safe for our residents.

The Council resolves:

1. Install up to date sprinklers and smoke alarms that are regularly checked – **retrofitted if needed without any exception**, and implement all relevant recommendations made by Lakanal House fire inquiry.
2. A clear public assurance that none of our buildings, not just THH tower blocks, is fitted with the cladding that contains '**flammable polyethylene**' used in Grenfell Tower or **have 'any combustible material'** that may spread instead of containing the fire.
3. The most appropriate fire safety doors that can at least withstand the fire for 60 minutes, retrofitted if necessary, in consultation with the residents.
4. Comply with the best practice and official advice from the Fire Brigade and other relevant authorities on fire safety.
5. Comply with the advice from The Department for Communities and Local Government which state: "**Cladding using a composite aluminium panel with a 'polyethylene core' would be non-compliant with current Building Regulations guidance.**"
6. Use the Council's position and power directly, or through appointed board members sitting on RSL boards and other influential places, to ensure that the above is complied with by the RSLs, the Council and THH.
7. Publish all Fire Risk Assessments carried out by the Council, THH and RSLs.
8. Keep all local ward councillors inform of any local issues in this regard.
9. With the Independent Group and others who may wish to join, write to the Government for urgent changes in the fire safety laws. Use the Council's reserves and/or contingency funds to ensure all our buildings - particularly high rise and tower blocks - are safe and are properly maintained.

Motion 12.14 Motion regarding additional security against terrorism

Proposer: Councillor Chris Chapman

Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds

This Council notes that;

Terror attacks in London which have included the use of vehicles to knock down and kill vulnerable pedestrians either in well visited areas or outside a Mosque. The presence within Tower Hamlets of a number of dense streets with large numbers of pedestrians present.

That the City of London is once again investing in physical security measures and intends to build a £5 million 'ring of steel' around the City to protect it from future terrorist attacks. This will include manned checkpoints, rising street bollards, restricted roads and crash-proof barricades. These precautions come after MI5 warned that the "eastern cluster" of towers planned or being built around Bishopsgate is "highly sensitive to the threat of a hostile, vehicle-borne" attack and will replace the previous ring of steel installed to ward off IRA attacks.

That the City of London is seeking S106 funds from developers in order to help fund this work.

That at within Tower Hamlets only the Canary Wharf estate has a similar level of physical protection.

The installation on London's bridges of concrete barriers to protect pedestrians from vehicle attacks.

The Council further notes;

That in February 1996 the IRA bombed Marsh Wall which killed two and injured and maimed many more, some who died of their wounds years later. This location was deliberately chosen as a softer target than Canary Wharf estate to the immediate north but one with the same level of publicity value.

That like the City of London Tower Hamlets has emerging clusters of tall towers in Aldgate, Blackwall, Marsh Wall and the areas to the north of Canary Wharf. None have any form of physical security built in or in the immediate area except for some ANPR cameras on some (but not all) of the approach routes. There is not even a publicly funded CCTV network in place in most of these areas.

The location in Tower Hamlets of several high-profile locations such as Brick Lane, Whitechapel, Marsh Wall, Roman Road and the Blackwall Tunnel Approach.

This Council believes that;

We also need to review our security measures in line with the City of London and have appropriate security measures in place to protect and deter potential attacks. And with so many tall buildings close together we may be perceived as a softer target especially as so many buildings are residential in nature.

The Council calls on the Mayor to;

Initiate a full security and safety review of the Borough which will be submitted to Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and the full council for consideration and final recommendations.
And;

1. Consult with MI5 on the potential security threats to Tower Hamlets given its strategic location and national assets
2. Consider adding to future S106 agreements additional funding for additional security measures over and above those funded through CIL
3. Identify in advance likely targets and consider what steps would be required to mitigate the impact of any future attack using vehicles or other methods
4. Publicise such preparation where appropriate, in order to reassure residents and deter potential attackers
5. Work with the City of London Corporation to ensure that any security cordon
6. includes developments physically located in Tower Hamlets but which are an extension of the City Fringe. That the same happens in the areas adjoining Canary Wharf or other possible targets like Whitechapel Mosque.

12.15 Motion Condemning Bigotry and Islamophobia in the reporting of the recent fostering story

Proposer: Councillor Shafi Ahmed
Seconder: Councillor Rabina Khan

The Council Notes:

1. The Times published the story headlined “Christian child forced into Muslim foster care” on 28th August 2017.
2. The article reported that a little Christian girl had been forced into foster care who sought to turn her against her own religion and culture. It was reported that the foster parents did not speak English, and confiscated the girl's crucifix necklace.
3. The story was also picked up by the Daily Mail and became a preoccupation of the national media.
4. That there are currently 52,000 children in foster care, 77% white & 22% BEM backgrounds."
5. Earlier this month, the Local Government Association warned that children's social care is at breaking point after the latest round of Government funding cuts.

The Council Further Notes:

1. That the coverage of the foster care story had undertones of Islamophobia, bigotry and xenophobia.
2. Like many fostering cases it is a complex case that needed to the facts to be portrayed carefully.
3. It later transpired that the child was only temporarily in the care of the Muslim family pending a successful assessment for her to be placed in the care of her grandmother who herself is reported to be from a Muslim background.
4. It is evident the fact that the foster family being Muslim is key to the criticism it has engendered.
5. Tower Hamlets Council responded to the articles, “While we cannot go into details of a case that would identify a child in foster care, there are inaccuracies in the reporting of it”.
6. However it has since been reported that the supposed confiscation of the girl's crucifix, the foster mother's wearing a face veil rather than a simple headscarf, and the foster family not speaking English were among the inaccuracies.

This Council Believes:

1. Foster children are often highly vulnerable; perhaps orphaned, neglected or with ill parents, so desperately need to feel secure.
2. A foster placement should be sensitive to a child's ethnicity, culture and religion.
3. Safeguarding the welfare of the child is paramount and the primary concern for the

council.

4. It is unsurprising that there will at times be fraught rows between biological families (inherently in some kind of difficulty in a fostering scenario) and foster families, and that journalists should be responsible enough not to take advantage of this.

5. The identity of both the foster carers and child must at all times remain as confidential, and that this was placed at risk by the coverage.

6. The story is an example of Islamophobia, where any incident involving Muslims becomes a national story spun to engender ill feeling towards Muslims.

7. The story was underpinned by a warped narrative that there is suspicion of Muslims.

8. It is vital for the council to address directly the underlying Islamophobia, bigotry and aim of bashing of immigrants in this story.

9. Low representation of Muslim foster carers results in the greater likelihood of Muslim children being placed with non-Muslim families with increased risk of the loss of the Muslim child's religious and cultural identity.

10. Safeguarding children is more at risk from this underfunding than it is from cultural mismatches.

This Council resolves:

1. To condemn the bigotry and Islamophobia of the reporting of the foster care story.

2. To instruct the chief executive to make a formal complaint to IPSO in respect of inaccurate coverage of this story in any newspapers.

3. To launch a targeted and sensitive approach to recruit more foster carers in the borough and work with all religious faith communities and to increase recruiting within their respective communities

4. To make sure that safeguarding and children's needs are paramount to any fostering placement and a foster placement seeks to be sensitive to a child's religious and cultural background.

12.16 Motion regarding Acid Attacks

Proposer: Councillor Mahbub Alam

Seconded: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

The Council notes:

Senseless, tragic and bigoted acid attacks have become prevalent in London and all over the United Kingdom. This year the number of attacks doubled. Too many families and individuals are suffering and falling victim to this grievous and criminal act.

London is being dubbed as 'Acid attack capital of Britain'. Instances of acid attacks are on the sharp increase in 2016, a big increase on the year before.

On 21 June in east London, Resham Khan, a university student, was driving a car with her cousin Jameel Mukhtar when they were victims of a horrific acid attack by a white male. Without any provocation or logic, out of nowhere, both were attacked with acid thrown at their face and body. Both will have scars that will never leave them. Their lives have been changed forever. The pair strongly believe this was an Islamophobic hate crime.

Worryingly, a high percentage of these attacks have been concentrated in a small pocket of east London with a high Muslim population - 398 attacks in Newham, 134 in Barking and Dagenham and **84 acid attacks in Tower Hamlets in recent years.**

Two of the most recent attacks were on Commercial Road with the junction of Sidney Street, in Tower Hamlets on 29 June – another such attack on Burdett Road, E3 at 02:13hrs on 4 July 2017. A separate attack, possibly unreported, took place in Watney Market in the week before. There are quite a few other attacks which were neither reported to the police, nor appeared in the media.

The Council believes:

The attackers seem to specifically target Muslims and/or Asians but an attack like this could happen to anyone.

The horrific injuries often sustained from such attacks can leave victims with permanent scarring, psychological problems and destroy their lives.

These barbaric and inhumane attacks, the impact on those who suffer as well as the wider community relations and cohesion, should not be dumbed down or diluted by anyone.

It is about time that the law changes for the purchase of corrosive acid and dangerous chemicals - right now anyone can buy it easily from any hardware store. A person can easily walk into a store and purchase this lethal substance or similar chemical off the shelf.

Corrosive acids like sulphuric acid are very lethal and life damaging substances. You should only be allowed to purchase them with a licence to buy or verifiable professional/trade identification. The person purchasing should go through checks before.

Many attacks could have been stopped if there were controls that made it harder to buy, and meant we knew more about people buying it.

Acid attacks have become too common, the Home Office and the local authorities through trading standards and other means available at their disposal needs to do something to bring it under control. It is a disgusting criminal act. We need licensing laws and the use of existing regulatory powers now to deter this from happening.

John Biggs needs to strengthen the scope of community safety and enforcement, with more resources, to protect and support our residents. He can easily do so by reversing his illogical cuts in budgets for the community safety team, enforcement team of police officers and THEOs.

The Council resolves:

The assailants of such inhumane attacks need to be prosecuted and publicised for an effective deterrence and punishment. Critically, the victims and the families of these barbaric attacks be supported in every way possible.

To reverse the Mayor's decision to sack 34 dedicated local partnership police officers - a critically important frontline resource - appointed by the former Mayor and his team who could be used to work with and provide support to the community.

With the Independent Group and others who may wish to join, to write to the Home Secretary, the Prime Minister and the local MPs to do whatever they can to change the laws on the purchase of corrosive acid and dangerous chemicals used in acid attacks.

To explore local authority's powers to stop the sale of these dangerous substances other than to licenced or registered trade buyers with a clear database and checks.

John Biggs to ensure an accurate and up to date monitoring and publication of Islamophobic crimes in Tower Hamlets. *(something which the Independent Group has been urging the Mayor for more than a year but the Mayor has failed to listen or deliver the information despite a promise by his cabinet member)*

John Biggs need to reverse his catastrophic decisions: to cut community safety team; to stop CCTV upgrades, to sack 10 THEOs; to remove the community safety coordinator post; and to bring the teams up to the level under the former Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his cabinet.

There needs to be more THEOs and the Police on the beat. CCTV and surveillance need to be a lot more robust in order to apprehend the assailants which mean the planned CCTV upgrade by the previous administration - stopped by John Biggs - must go ahead immediately.

12.17 Motion regarding Knife Crime, Acid and Hate Attacks

Proposer: Councillor Shafi Ahmed

Seconder: Councillor Shah Alam

This Council Notes:

- Tower Hamlets has also seen a sharp rise in hate crime in the past year.
- Islamophobic hate crime has risen 59% to 86 reported incidents, while there were 122 reported homophobic incidents, a rise of 39%.
- Other racist and religious hate crimes increased by 43% to a total of 838 reported crimes.
- The borough has seen an increase in knife crime with figures with Tower Hamlets (1,087) been one of the highest in London.
- Tower Hamlets has also seen the rise of acid attacks with incidents in Shadwell and Mile End.
- That the Acid Survivors Trust International launched an education film on raising awareness of the history of Acid Attacks.

This Council Resolves:

- That a review of the Gangs Strategy is immediately undertaken with a comprehensive plan of detached and outreach youth work to take place.
- That the Mayor honours his commitment to the requests made by Syed Jamanoor Islam's family at the vigil held in Altab Ali Park in April 2017 following his death to tackle knife crime.
- That all Elected Member are given appropriate support to access the support of police and other agencies to tackle knife, acid and hate crime in their respective wards through additional policing and gang prevention work.
- This support must be developed with each elected member in their respective wards with their communities.
- Each ward in Tower Hamlets must now have its own youth centre that delivers a multi agency services to work with children and young people engage in positive activities but working in partnership with the police, local groups, schools and statutory agencies.
- The legal definition of an offensive weapon includes anything intended to be used to harm another person, like a sharpened comb. Acid must also now be seen as an offensive weapon.
- The Mayor to write a joint letter with all Group Leaders to Secretary of State to request a national study of Acid Attacks and the phenomenal rise of the attacks.
- That Trading Standards provide a review paper on the sale and access of Acid and corrosive substance in Tower Hamlets.

12.18 Motion regarding the Public Sector Pay Cap – including Tower Hamlets staff and emergency workers

Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Seconder: Councillor Gulam Robbani

The Council notes:

The political choice of austerity has failed miserably.

The Tory Government and their allies need to recognise that the economic approach of the past decade has been an abject failure. The recent economic data shows that growth has slowed, Inflation is rising. Wages - when adjusted for prices - are lower than they were when the last recession began in early 2008.

Britain has a cost-of-living crisis as well as a political crisis but most importantly it is affecting our residents, our staff, wider public sector workers, civil servants and their loved ones which in turn affect the local economy and the wider society.

Local Government is the most efficient part of the public sector according to Government. Tower Hamlets council staff have had their pay frozen or capped for nearly a decade.

Firefighters, Nurses, Police, Paramedics, all put their lives on the line to protect people, but right now they're suffering because of a pay cap which means that wages stay frozen while costs of living continue to go up.

MPs had their pay increased by 10%. John Biggs gave himself a 14.24% pay increase and granted a 40% increase to the pay packet of a local Tory councillor.

Stephen Crabb, the former Conservative Work and Pension Secretary, as well as, Government Cabinet Ministers, Michael Gove and Boris Johnson have called for the pay cap to be lifted. Regrettably and hypocritically, they did not vote for removal of the cap in the Parliament.

The Chancellor had previously claimed that the public is "weary" of austerity and wants to see an end to the "long slog" of cutbacks. The latest comments from within the Government's top brass about austerity and pay cap follow accusations of a Government "shambles" on the issue after a Number 10 source said the PM was ready to listen to the pay review bodies' recommendations, only for her official spokesman and the Treasury to insist "the policy has not changed".

Speaking to Panorama, a former Tory MP and now Theresa May's Chief of Staff at No 10 Downing Street, Mr Barwell said "There's a conversation I particularly remember with a teacher who had voted for me in 2010 and 2015 and said 'you know I understand the need for a pay freeze for a few years to deal with the deficit but you're now asking for that to go on potentially for 10 or 11 years and that's too much'.

The Council believes:

Given the outstanding job that our emergency services perform week in, week out, we feel that they deserve just reward for their efforts.

Given the recent tragedies and the incredible bravery and heroism these people and their colleagues across the country have shown, with little thought for their own lives, it is time

to find the money to make sure these brave and honourable men and women are being paid a decent wage for the incredible job they do.

We all saw the brave police tackling the terrorists at London Bridge, the firefighters rushing in to tackle the Grenfell fire, the paramedics running to help the people caught up in the Manchester terror attack. And every day nurses working round the clock to keep our NHS going. These people shouldn't have to worry about whether they can pay their rent or the electricity bill at the end of the month.

The Council resolves:

With the Independent Group, the Mayor to write to the Chancellor and Prime Minister asking them to remove the pay cap and officially end austerity in order to help the working people, the public-sector workers and local authorities including our hard-working council staff.

With the Independent Group, the Mayor to write to the local MPs and shadow chancellor John McDonnell requesting them to do whatever in their power to influence and force the Government to lift the pay cap - present an Early Day Motion or a joint opposition motion - and vote for it in the Parliament at the next possible opportunity in light of clear divisions in the Government at the highest level.

12.19 Motion regarding John Biggs failing the Borough and austerity axing the Olympic Legacy

Proposer: Councillor Maium Miah
Seconded: Councillor Oliur Rahman

The Council Notes:

Residents and Tower Hamlets Independent Group of councillors are disappointed to learn that the number of people playing a sport or taking another form of exercise at least once a week has fallen since the Olympic Games were held in east London.

Although participation in sport has risen since 2005, the Olympics were supposed to leave a legacy of greater participation in sport after the event – and it's not happening in East London. A particular worry is that the highest decline has been among ethnic minority communities (a drop of 1.4%) and least well-off sections of the community (a drop of 2.9%).

The Games cost £8.77 billion to stage – but already 8,700 fewer people are participating in sport or exercise at least once a week than were doing so in 2012. The main factors influencing whether people take exercise include whether they have facilities nearby and whether they can afford to use them. Sport England figures show that overall Council spending on local sports has fallen by over a quarter (£389 million) over the last five years – and this is thought to be contributing to the decline in participation rates.

Cllr Ohid Ahmed, Shadow Lead for Community Safety and Partnerships, said: "It is sad to see that the number of people participating in sports at a grassroots level has begun to fall. This is not the Olympic legacy we were hoping for – or that we were promised. With John Biggs creating uncertainty over the future of our youth clubs and other community centres, it's going to be difficult to keep our young people healthy."

In relation to Tower Hamlets Council, the Trustees of the Tower Hamlets Youth Sport Foundation (THYSF) are lobbying the Members for support after the breakdown of their discussions with the Mayor and Council last month - after they first raised the need for Council action with the Mayor in August 2015.

John Biggs inherited over £400m reserves from the former Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his administration which were put aside through robust and painstaking fiscal management to protect the residents and key local services from cuts and closures.

The Council Believes:

The Trustees of the THYSF are lobbying for the support of our residents and elected representatives to help them save what is currently the most successful youth sport partnership in the country.

Our children are in danger of losing, as the article by Seb Coe in the Evening Standard (15 May 2017), circulated by THYSF to Members, shows the alarming deterioration in youth sport in our country as a whole, the final page of this shows how everything Lord Coe would wish to see available nationally is currently still in place in Tower Hamlets - for some of the most economically deprived youngsters in the UK. **Not for much longer however, since the breakdown of our discussions with the Mayor and Council officers last month - after we first raised the need for Council action with the Mayor in August 2015 - now seems certain to result in the staff being made redundant and the organisation and its activities dismantled.**

The email from THYSF, among other facts and information, stated that **“For those of you unfamiliar with the organisation, the second attachment gives just a flavour of the range of activities and opportunities available to youngsters in Tower Hamlets right this minute. None of which is provided by or through the Council. Most of which will go if this organisation is allowed to go under.”**

“For historical reasons (this all started with the national School Sports Partnerships scheme in 2005) the staff of THYSF are all employed by Langdon Park School (where I was the Headteacher for 21 years until 2013), but they did this on behalf of the Borough’s schools and by agreement with the Council. Langdon Park, having done an extraordinary job for Tower Hamlets for 12 years, now quite understandably needs to be relieved of this responsibility. Trustees of THYSF believe the obvious answer is for the staff to be adopted as a business unit in the Council’s sports department, which currently and by design focuses nearly all of its work on adult provision. The Mayor disagrees, and wants Trustees to take responsibility for employing the staff, something we are very clear we do not have the capacity to do.”

The Council Resolves:

John Biggs should listen to THYSF, Tower Hamlets Independent Group, our young people and residents by transparently addressing the points raised herein.

John Biggs needs to act – beyond platitudes – and update the members and residents about the issues raised in this motion.

Notes in relation to Motion 12.2 regarding the recently reported Child AB in Foster Care

The following Acts of Parliament and Regulations which are the statutory requirements for cases like this.

Children Act 1989 (c. 41)

Part III – SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PROVIDED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND

(4) Before making any decision with respect to a child whom they are looking after, or proposing to look after, a local authority shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, ascertain the wishes and feelings of—

- a) the child;*
- b) his parents;*
- c) any person who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him;
and*
- d) any other person whose wishes and feelings the authority consider to be relevant, regarding the matter to be decided.*

(5) In making any such decision a local authority shall give due consideration—

- a) having regard to his age and understanding, to such wishes and feelings of the child as they have been able to ascertain;*
- b) to such wishes and feelings of any person mentioned in subsection (4)(b) to(d) as they have been able to ascertain; and*
- c) to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.*

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

Part 4

11. The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that—

(a) the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times, and

(b) before making any decision affecting a child placed or to be placed with a foster parent

due consideration is given to the child's—

- (i) wishes and feelings (having regard to the child's age and understanding), and***
- (ii) religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.***

That the following is also relevant;

United Nations - Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration

Article 20

3. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended these rules in the case of adoption cases and not for fostering and still has this to say;

“These provisions, therefore, mean that the adoption agency is already and will remain under a duty to have regard to the child’s religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background, amongst other factors, where relevant.”

Reports Published

This Council notes that the following in italics are direct quotes from the articles written by Andrew Norfolk, the Chief Investigative Reporter for The Times newspaper published between August 28th and 30th. There is a degree of duplication as they are taken from six separate news reports and are a summary only of the key points. Tower Hamlets Council disputes some of these reports.

In confidential local authority reports seen by The Times, a social services supervisor describes the child sobbing and begging not to be returned to the foster carer’s home because “they don’t speak English”.

It is understood that the child told her mother that when she was given her favourite Italian food to take home, the foster carer would not allow her to eat it because the carbonara meal contained bacon.

More recently, the girl is said to have told her mother that “Christmas and Easter are stupid” and that “European women are stupid and alcoholic”.

The Times revealed yesterday that the five-year-old girl, a native English speaker from a Christian family, has spent six months with Muslim foster carers who allegedly removed her necklace, which had a cross, and refused to allow her to eat bacon.

A social services supervisor for Tower Hamlets in east London described the child sobbing and begging not to be returned to the foster family because “she doesn’t understand the Arabic”. The girl is also understood to have said that she was regularly expected to eat meals on the floor.

A Tower Hamlets employee who supervised regular meetings between the child and her family recorded the child’s distress, at the conclusion of each meeting, when she was handed over to the carer.

In a written report of one meeting, the contact supervisor described the girl as “very emotional and tearful”.

“She said they don’t speak English at the home, she doesn’t understand the Arabic words where she is. [The girl] said she wants to go back home to her [mother].”

The social services employee heard the child whispering Arabic words to her mother that she was allegedly told must be said aloud to ensure that “when you die you go to heaven”.

Her reports also describe the child’s account of her necklace, which carried a Christian cross, having been removed, and not returned, by the first foster carer.

After another supervised meeting, the council worker heard the child explaining to her mother that the foster carer “said she needs to ask [her social worker] if she can learn Arabic”.

At the end of the meeting, the girl “started crying and saying that she doesn’t want to go back”.

On the 29th August Judge HHJ Sapnara released a Case Management Report

It had these relevant sections’

Documents including the assessment of the maternal grandparents state that they are of a Muslim background but are non-practising. The child’s mother says they are of Christian heritage.

The child’s Guardian has undertaken enquiries and visited the child in the current foster carer’s home and spoken to the child alone. The Guardian has no concerns as to the child’s welfare and she reports that the child is settled and well cared for by the foster carer

There was no culturally matched foster placement available at the time. There was a temporary change of foster carer in the summer to enable the original foster carer to go on holiday

On 27th June 2017, the court directed the Local Authority to produce a statement to address the cultural appropriateness of the foster care placement.