


Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 17 January 2018	
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. Twenty motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 17th January 2018. Two Motions, those for the Administration and Opposition Motion Debates are listed earlier at items 7 and 8 on the agenda.
2. The remaining 18 motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the protocol agreed by the Council on 22 November 2017, the motions are listed to alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups, with the Opposition Group motions starting with the largest Political Group not to have the meeting's Opposition Motion debate slot.
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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 9.3 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 Thrive LDN

Proposer: Councillor Denise Jones

Seconder: Councillor Amina Ali

This Council acknowledges that two million Londoners experience poor mental health, which equates to 62,500 people in each borough, and that London's suicide rate increased by 33 per cent from 552 to 735 incidents between 2014 and 2015 – the highest figure recorded by the Office for National Statistics since records began.

This Council understands that employment for Londoners with a mental health problem is 31 per cent lower than the UK average and that the financial cost of mental ill-health is approximately £700million for each London borough.

This Council reaffirms its commitment to approach mental health and wellbeing as a key priority and to work collaboratively with partners within and outside the borough to address and tackle mental ill-health across our communities.

This council commits to support and work with Thrive LDN to:

1. Create a citywide movement for all Londoners that empowers individuals and communities in our borough to lead change, address inequalities that lead to poor mental health and create their own ways to improve mental health.
2. Following on from the examples set by Harrow Thrive and Black Thrive in Lambeth, look in to localising Thrive LDN to Tower Hamlets by exploring the practicalities of establishing a local Thrive hub that responds to local needs
3. Examine new methods to support more people in Tower Hamlets to access a range of activities that help them to maintain good mental health and wellbeing.
4. Work closely with partners across Tower Hamlets to end mental health stigma and discrimination.
5. Build on the great work happening across London to engage children and young people in mental health by helping Thrive LDN to develop training and resources for youth organisations, schools and student societies.
6. Support employers to make mental health and wellbeing central to the workplace.
7. Work with partners to explore new ways to access services and support, and consider the use of digital technologies to promote mental health and improve information about accessing support.
8. Work with partners and build on the excellent work being done across the borough to reduce suicides in Tower Hamlets. We will build on existing suicide reduction and prevention initiatives by establishing a zero suicide ambition for Tower Hamlets.

12.2 Motion regarding Stop the Cut to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme

Proposer: Councillor Aminur Khan

Seconder: Councillor Abdul Asad

The Council Notes;

1. That by HM Revenue & Customs' Children in Low-income Families Local Measure, 42% of all children in the borough live in poverty. This is the highest rate nationally, and is more than double the rate for England (20 per cent), and well above the London average (24 per cent).
2. That all wards in Tower Hamlets have child poverty rates well above the national average of 20%. The rate ranges from 33% in St Katharine's & Wapping ward and up to 48% in the ward of Bow East.
3. That rates are more polarised at Lower Super Output Area level (LSOA), ranging from 9% in the Canary Wharf area and up to 58% in parts of Blackwall and Cubitt Town. Only ten of the borough's 144 LSOAs have rates below the national average of 20%.
4. That the risk of child poverty rises with family size: in Tower Hamlets, 47% of children who live in families with 3 or more children live in poverty, compared with 34% of those families with just one child. Larger families in Tower Hamlets have a higher risk of poverty than larger families nationally (47% vs. 29%).
5. That Mayor John Biggs cut the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for thousands of the borough's poorest and most vulnerable residents, but awarded himself an 11% overall pay rise.
6. That Mayor John Biggs' proposal replaced the current scheme with one where all working age claimants will be expected to pay at least 20% of their council tax liability, although one of the proposed options does include an exemption for a few vulnerable groups, but there's no guarantee.
7. That where other London boroughs have introduced such 'Minimum Payment' schemes, the result has pushed low-income residents deeper into poverty, stifling social mobility.
8. That Camden Council has recognised the hardship caused by its minimum payment scheme and is proposing to abolish it and reinstate 100% support from next year. This shows it is possible to avoid passing funding cuts onto the poorest residents.

The Council Believes;

1. That the council tax reduction has impacted on the cost of living for many Tower Hamlets' residents and will result in unfortunate choices between providing for their families, paying utility bills or paying their council tax, which Mayor Biggs increased by 4% in February 2016.
2. That Mayor John Biggs' proposal resulted in the abolition of the 100% support that currently exists for the borough's 23,000 working age claimants.
3. That Mayor John Biggs' cut to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) has impacted on self-employed working families, in particular mini-cab drivers, and vulnerable and disabled adults.

The Council Resolves to;

1. Call on Mayor John Biggs to reverse the cut to Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for thousands of the borough's poorest and most vulnerable residents.
2. Call on Mayor John Biggs not to award himself an unreasonable pay rise when a large proportion of the Tower Hamlets' community is struggling to cope financially.

12.3 Motion regarding Planning Decisions

Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood

Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds

This Council notes that;

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the fastest growing borough in the country with the highest national receipts of New Homes Bonus. The planning system in Tower Hamlets decides more large scale planning applications than any other borough in the country. It is therefore essential that planning decisions are made and seen to be made correctly and are not influenced by external factors whether that be bribery or other inappropriate influences.

Some residents though have a belief that only corruption can explain the huge amount of development underway in parts of the borough. They often talk of 'brown' paper envelopes being passed around.

The Sunday Times account of alleged corruption in the Alpha Square development published on Sunday December 10th 2017 reinforces those prejudices. Allegations of serious corruption in the planning system only became public two years after the initial incident was reported to the council and only then by a whistleblower unconnected to the to the council or other authorities.

Whether the initial bribery attempt was serious or not, the council delayed reporting what they knew to the appropriate authorities for some considerable amount of time. This lack of action in the face of serious allegations of corruption means that residents and taxpayers cannot have full confidence that planning decisions made before the story broke on the 10th December 2017, were not in some way affected by bribery or the knowledge that an attempt at bribery had been made.

This Council further notes;

That the Councils own Anti-Bribery Policy has the following relevant sections

- *'Bribery is a criminal offence.'*
- *"To use a third party as a conduit to channel bribes to others is a criminal offence."*
- *"comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the laws and regulations of all jurisdictions in which the organisation operates, in respect of the lawful and responsible conduct of activities"*
- *"Rigorously investigating instances of alleged bribery and assisting police and other appropriate authorities in any resultant prosecution"*
- *"There is also a corporate offence under Section 7 of failure by a commercial organisation to prevent bribery that is intended to obtain or retain business, or an advantage in the conduct of business, for the organisation."*

That the Councils Whistleblowing Policy says

- *"If there is evidence of criminal activity then the investigating officer will be obliged to inform the police."*

That the allegations reported to Mayor John Biggs were sufficiently serious for both him and Will Tuckley, Chief Executive to go for a walk down to the river Thames in late 2015; two years before the events entered the public domain.

That the Council had access to the audio tape also made available to the *Sunday Times* (excerpts of which *the Sunday Times* provided online) which provided references to the attempted bribery, the introductions made and the alleged nature of the people who could be bribed as well as party political donations that would be made if the bribery offer was accepted.

Yet it was not until August 2016 that the council informed the authorities and then only after being told to so by a distinguished QC.

The slow response by the council indicates that residents and taxpayers cannot know whether any other attempts at bribery or undue influence were made by this same person.

That in order to regain where possible public confidence in the Planning system that the council:

1. Publish in writing on the Councils website the full timeline as to what the council knew and what action was taken. This is of vital importance as currently the only publicly available information is contained within several newspaper reports (some behind a paywall) and on a 30 minute long video recording of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 19th December 2017. Not even a transcript of this meeting is available. This does not provide confidence and assurance in the councils willingness to deal with issues like this.
2. That the Tower Hamlets council planning team ascertain from developers whether the individual alleged to have made the bribery attempt has worked for any other developers active in the Borough. If yes, that information be put in the public domain and any associated planning applications be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
3. That members on the two Development Committees are provided with additional training as to their legal and planning responsibilities and the penalties for corrupt and illegal practices.
4. That the council make clear what its legal, statutory and moral responsibilities are when an alleged crime is reported to it. Especially when that alleged crime is committed by a 3rd party not employed by the council.
5. That the council publicly places on record exactly what information was provided to the DCLG Commissioners who were in situation at the time and responsible, with the Mayor and officers, for producing a Best Value programme for the council.
6. Update policies to make clear the process actually undertaken in this case as it does not appear to have been policy compliant
7. To always immediately report any information on an alleged crime to the Police rather than wait to be told to do so by a distinguished QC.
8. Publicly explain why the council appears to have undertaken an internal preliminary investigation rather than hand the material to the police.

9. Confirm the cost to council taxpayers of employing external accountants and counsel.

10. Clarify what the role, powers and expertise is of forensic auditors to investigate an issue like this when the key individuals were outside of the council?

11. What extra powers or expertise do these external auditors provide beyond those available to the Police?

12. In future brief members when it knows important stories about Tower Hamlets are due to appear in the national press. The Council knew on Thursday 7th December that this investigation was to be published by the *Sunday Times*, but no information was provided to members directly either then or after the story ran on the 10th December 2017. Subsequently group leaders were later provided with a statement they were not, for no apparent reason, allowed to share. That is still the case with the exception of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting where the appearance of the Mayor and Chief Executive on this matter was not known until shortly before the meeting commenced and for obvious reasons questions were limited.

13. That the account noted in paragraph 12 above indicates a regression to the secrecy and obfuscation which was prevalent during the previous administration.

14. That Tower Hamlets Council review it's planning processes to ensure that where possible they are bribe proof and that until the National Crime Agency investigation is complete it seeks external assistance to check that planning applications have been correctly dealt with. Until then the suspicion will remain that bribery is a penalty free activity and that attempts at bribery can be made with impunity in Tower Hamlets. The council needs to ensure that such attempts are not worth making.

The council calls upon the Labour Party to reveal any financial connections with the person identified in the tape and what help and assistance, financial and otherwise, that he has given to Labour Party election campaigns in the borough.

That the Department for Communities and Local Government appoints Commissioners to supervise planning applications in the borough until the investigation into this incident is complete.

This Council further notes with concern that the person identified in the tape claims not to have been interviewed by any investigating authority. In view of past experience in dealing with corruption in Tower Hamlets the authorities are urged to make investigation of this matter a priority.

12.4 Motion regarding 'Tower Hamlets Acid Register' & the Council's Existing Regulatory Powers* *(in the aftermath of two recent acid attacks on 27 December 2017 in Tower Hamlets)*

Proposer: Councillor Maium Miah
Seconder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

This Council notes:

Senseless, tragic and bigoted acid attacks have become prevalent in London. 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 2016/17, a big increase on the year before.

Tower Hamlets is now the third worst borough for acid attacks in London according to the official statistics. Worryingly, a high percentage of these attacks have been concentrated in a small pocket of east London with 398 attacks in Newham, 134 in Barking and Dagenham and more than 84 acid attacks in Tower Hamlets in recent years. These figures exclude the recently reported acid attacks in 2017 and the unreported attacks which will further increase the number in relation to Tower Hamlets statistics.

Most recently, there were two separate horrific acid attacks in Tower Hamlets on the same day within the space of just two hours – one in Canary Wharf ward, another in Blackwall and Cubitt Town in the Isle of Dogs - on Wednesday evening 27th December. According to the police and other reports, on 27 December, a 36-year-old white woman suffered serious life-changing burns to her leg and face after she was hurled at with acid very close to South Quay Tesco/DLR station at 18.50 hours. No ID on the attacker or why she was attacked was established. She is in hospital at the time of writing this question. The 2nd attack was on an Asian male by two white men at 20.30 hours. The attack started on Glengall Grove close leading to the George pub but the actual attack was close to or in Crossharbour DLR. The police have decent CCTV images of these attackers, described as 'The suspects are believed to have gotten out of a Volkswagen car and are described as two White males aged 20 – 22 years old approximately. 5"10 tall, one was dressed in a Grey hooded top with a baseball cap, the other was in a blue jacket with a short beard.'

Previously, on 21 June 2017 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 believed and said they felt this was an Islamophobic hate crime.

Two of the other recent attacks in Tower Hamlets were on Commercial Road with the junction of Sidney Street, in Tower Hamlets on 29 June 2017 – 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.

This Council believes:

Acid has become a weapon of choice used by younger criminals because it is far too

easy to get hold of, far too cheap to buy, and most importantly far too unregulated – something Tower Hamlets Council has the regulatory power over and must do more to address this serious criminal and horrendous issue.

The horrific injuries often sustained from such attacks can leave victims with permanent scarring, deep psychological problems and destroy their lives. These barbaric and inhumane attacks seriously impact on those who suffer as well as the wider community.

After media stories and campaigns led by many victims and civil society including the Independent Group, the Government had announced that under 18s will be banned from buying acid but the Government and the local authority (Tower Hamlets Council) can and must do more to tackle this menace and horrific crime as 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 dangerous substances. Independent Group believes that you should only be allowed to purchase them with a licence or with a verifiable professional/trade identification. The person purchasing should go through checks before.

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

This Council Resolves:

Tower Hamlets Council and its current Mayor must implement practical and sensible action urgently upon which the Council and the Mayor already have control and power over. After lobbying and pressure from the Independent Group, residents, victims, media and the civil society, a local acid charter by the council is a small step in the right direction, but it must go beyond public relation management exercise and promotion of John Biggs in order to genuinely reassure the residents and deter horrific acid attack crimes on our residents.

To immediately explore its already available regulatory powers and other existing means to seriously and effectively deter these disgusting criminal acts.

Given that Tower Hamlets is the third worst borough for the acid attacks, the Council will:

- a)** immediately create a 'Tower Hamlets Acid Register' on a voluntary basis for shops and businesses to record who they sell 'acid' or 'dangerous liquids' to;
- b)** ensure compliance when the government changes the legislation to prohibit the sale of acid/ potentially dangerous liquids to under 18s in the borough which is being used as the weapon of choice in attacks on our innocent residents; and
- c)** urge the government to increase the restrictions on the sale of acid and dangerous liquids for example to ensure that they are sold only with a licence or with a verifiable professional/trade identification and that the person purchasing should go through identity checks.

12.5 Motion regarding Tower Hamlets Drugs Service in Special Measures

Proposer: Councillor Shafi Ahmed

Secunder: Councillor Rabina Khan

The Council Notes;

1. Cllr Rabina Khan emailed Mayor John Biggs the following email on 17th December 2017:

“I write to ask for urgent clarification on the substance misuse service being provided in Tower Hamlets. As you are aware, last year your administration restructured the entire substance misuse work in Tower Hamlets, which was previously delivered by a number of providers successfully. This included the highly regarded service delivered by Nafas, which caused great concern in the borough. The restructuring led to three new providers, which commenced only last November 2016.

Six months into the appointment, Lifeline – who were awarded the Recovery Services’ contract – went bust, which in itself was a scandal as it calls into question the borough’s due diligence, or the lack of it in this case. Questions still remain as to why Lifeline were awarded this contract when they were having internal mismanagement issue since 2015, according to newspaper reports.

You then approved Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) – now known as CGL – to take over from Lifeline and run the Recovery Services without going to tender. Yet, a further failure and back door decision by you and your administration.

We now understand that the entire substance misuse service in the borough is under performing and has been put on special measures.

This is very concerning to me and the residents of this borough who place high importance on drugs and drug treatment in Tower Hamlets.

The fact that these services were put on special measure have been kept under wraps by your administration to avoid embarrassment and questions from residents.

I ask you to clarify the following:

- 1) To confirm whether substance misuse services were put on special measures and when this happened.
- 2) To provide a list of specific areas where the services were failing borough residents, due to their underperformance.
- 3) To provide a performance comparison with previous years in all key measurement areas and demographics.
- 4) To provide a breakdown of client demographics entering each of these respective services.

The failure of these providers undoubtedly resulted in many borough residents not receiving the services they required. One wonders how many potential service users missed out on essential services and the impact of that on their continued drug and alcohol use, not to mention the impact on their families and the wider community.”

The Council Resolves;

1. That Mayor John Biggs provides a full briefing to all Elected Members of the process by which Lifeline was appointed and on what basis NAFAS was disregarded as a contractor delivering drug misuse intervention services. The briefing must also include the following:
 - 1) Confirm whether substance misuse services were put on special measures and when this happened.
 - 2) List of specific areas where the services were failing borough residents due to their underperformance.
 - 3) A performance comparison with previous years in all key measurement areas and demographics.
 - 4) A breakdown of client demographics entering each of these respective services.
2. Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) now known as CGL took over from Lifeline to run the Recovery Services without going to tender – briefing must explain the process.
3. The failure of these providers undoubtedly resulted in many borough residents not receiving the services they required – please provide how vulnerable people were safeguarded.

12.6 Motion regarding CCTV cameras

Proposer: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconder: Councillor Andrew Wood

This Council notes that the Council has 339 permanent CCTV cameras across the Borough and that the distribution is as in the table below.

The Council further notes:

That the Infrastructure Delivery Plan October 2017 has allocated no money to the expansion of the network in the next fifteen years despite substantial population growth in a number of wards and that the location of many cameras reflect priorities from some years ago and may need to be refreshed.

That there has been a series of street robberies in late 2017 in Limehouse ward along Narrow Street, Ropemakers Fields and Limehouse Basin. That seemingly in response to Police Operation Naga, attacks appear to have moved to the boundaries of Limehouse ward including St James Gardens and an attempted attack on the Canary Riverside.

That on Wednesday 27th December 2017, two separate 'acid' attacks on the Isle of Dogs 1 ½ hours and 5 minutes walk apart.

That even where wards appear to have CCTV cameras their effectiveness is poor due to poor links back to the control room in Mulberry Place.

That the Infrastructure Plan only plans to improve links between Victoria Park and Mulberry Place.

This Council believes that;

Criminals know where the Council CCTV cameras are and are likely to exploit any gaps in that network.

The council calls on the Mayor to ;

Expand the permanent CCTV network to growth areas and to ensure a fairer distribution of cameras as many areas paying large amounts of Council tax receive no benefit from the Council CCTV network.

That the Mayor notes that whilst previous experience of crime is a factor the council needs to better anticipate problems in the future.

Ensure all Council CCTV cameras are of the highest technical quality with high quality fibre links back to the control room.

That the Council work with other stakeholders on a joint CCTV network strategy so that whether Council or private or housing association camera they effectively work together to capture criminal activity.

That the Council provide the Met Police with a way of accessing the network that does not require driving to and from Mulberry Place, thereby saving both time and expense to the police.

The Mayor notes the table below, which is completely unrepresentative of the problems facing the borough.

Ward	Permanent CCTV Cameras	Populatio n 2016	CCTV Per Person
Limehouse	0	8,200	None
Stepney Green	2	13,600	6,800
Canary Wharf	3	14,600	4,867
Bromley North	6	14,000	2,333
Bromley South	7	11,700	1,671
Blackwall and Cubitt Town	7	18,500	2,643
Poplar	9	8,000	889
St Katharine's and Wapping	9	12,400	1,378
Island Gardens	14	16,500	1,179
Lansbury	14	17,300	1,236
Shadwell	15	11,500	767
St Dunstons	15	11,800	787
Weavers	16	14,900	931
Mile End	19	17,400	916
Bethnal Green	21	22,200	1,057
Bow West	30	13,500	450
Whitechapel	31	15,200	490
St Peters	31	19,000	613
Bow East	33	15,900	482
Spitalfields and Banglatown	57	14,100	247
Total	339	290,300	856

12.7 Motion regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Proposer: Councillor Oliur Rahman

Secunder: Councillor Ohid Ahmed

The Council Notes:

Because of changes made by the administration to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for poor and vulnerable residents, many residents are suffering – especially the self-employed residents and tax payers.

One of the changes made by the administration was to use notional earnings equivalent to 35 hours at the National Living Wage in the assessment of Council Tax Reduction for residents who have been self-employed for over one year and whose declared earnings are below this figure.

The Council Resolves:

The Council must reconsider its approach and reinstate its Council Tax Reduction Scheme to pre-April status as the change put in place by the Mayor and the administration are having a significant negative impact on the residents.

12.8 Motion regarding Gender Pay Gap

Proposer: Councillor Rabina Khan

Seconder: Councillor Abjol Miah

This Council Notes:

1. That 48 years after the Equal Pay Act of 1970, women still earn, on average, [less per hour](#) than men do.
2. That in 2017, England had the highest overall gender pay gap of 10%, with a [UK average](#) of 9.1%.
3. That analysis by the TUC reveals that the [annual salary pay gap](#) between the top-earning women and top-earning men is 54.9%.
4. That on [Equal Pay Day](#) (10 November 2017), it was revealed that the gender pay gap for women in their 20s is increasing, with some women being paid less than men at the beginning of their careers.
5. That [pay inequality in Tower Hamlets](#) is significantly higher than that of all other boroughs.
6. That in Tower Hamlets, women's [average hourly wage](#) has been slashed by 6.7 per cent to £19.60, while men's has slightly dropped by 1.9 per cent to £26.90.
7. [In 183 out of 206 local authority](#) areas, men in full time jobs earn more on average than women, but the gap varies from place to place.
8. The top 10 includes the Tower Hamlets.

This Council Believes:

1. That there should be an immediate gender pay-gap audit of the Council.

This Council Resolves to:

1. Audit a report of the current gender pay gaps at London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
2. Commit to flexible working, enabling more mothers of young children to work from home.
3. Commit to better maternity and paternity leave options for parents and carers.

12.9 Motion regarding women's suffrage

Proposer: Councillor Chris Chapman

Seconder: Councillor Julia Dockerill

This council notes that this year, 2018, is the centenary of the enfranchisement of women permitting them to vote in local and national elections and to stand for election to Parliament for the first time.

The enfranchisement of women came partly as a response to the tremendous efforts made by the women of this country in the war effort between 1914-1918 and partly as a result of the heroics of the women's suffrage campaign and their supporters.

This Council notes with pride the involvement of local women in the war effort in an area where much local work was dangerous and hard and to the local personalities who had fought for universal suffrage before 1914.

Tower Hamlets public figures who were at the forefront of the women's suffrage movement included George Lansbury, who resigned his parliamentary seat of Poplar; Bow and Bromley in 1912 to contest a by-election in support of women's suffrage. Later, Emily Pankhurst who, at the time of her death in 1928, was the Conservative candidate for the Stepney; Whitechapel and St George's constituency was campaigning to secure the equal voting age for all electors, men and women, which came into law just three months after she passed away.

The Council resolves that in the centenary of women's suffrage we unanimously commit to ensuring that all women electors vote according to their own opinions and to vote in secrecy without harassment or intimidation.

12.10 Motion regarding the new direction from the secretary of state for education about failure of tower hamlets children services

Proposer: Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim

Secunder: Councillor Mahbub Alam

The Council Notes:

1. On 12 September 2017, The Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, issued a fresh "Direction" to Tower Hamlets Council because John Biggs led Labour administration was failing the residents in the critical statutory area of 'children social care'.

2. Full details of the decision can be found here on the Government website https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643844/Tower_Hamlets_Direction_Sept_2017_signed_v2.pdf

3. Tower Hamlets Children's Services Improvement Board was already chaired by a former DCLG appointed Commissioner in a new capacity as the Improvement Board Chair due to failure in April 2017 when OFSTED judged Tower Hamlets Children Services to be "inadequate" – the worst possible rating. The same service was judged "Good" with outstanding features under the previous OFSTED inspection.

4. The Secretary of State has now imposed fresh "Intervention Advisers" from two outside authorities (Islington and Lincolnshire County Council), whose own OFSTED inspection reports revealed their own services to be Good with Outstanding features, and the first line of their Terms of Reference state "London Borough of Tower Hamlets has failed in its delivery of children's social care services."

5. The latest decision by the Secretary of State is a clear proof that Government have no trust in John Biggs led Labour administration and their existing plan of improvement for Tower Hamlets Children Services.

6. After shambolic OFSTED failure, in yet another damning verdict on John Biggs's mayoralty, the new "Direction" letter from the Secretary of State stated, inter alia, the following:

· "...the Council is failing to perform to an adequate standard, some or all of the functions to which section 497A of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") is applied by section 50 of the Children Act 2004 ("children's social care functions");

· The Secretary of State, having considered representations made by the Council, considers it expedient, in accordance with her powers under section 497A(4B) of the Education Act 1996, to direct the Council as set out below in order to ensure that all of the Council's children's social care functions are performed to an adequate standard; and

· Pursuant to section 497A(4B) of the Education Act 1996, the Secretary of State directs the Council as follows:

a. To comply with any instructions of the Secretary of State in relation to the improvement of the Council's exercise of its children's social care functions and to provide such assistance as may be required;

b. To co-operate with the Intervention Advisers, including on request allowing the Intervention Advisers at all reasonable times access:

- i. to any premises of the Council;
- ii. to any document of or relating to the Council; and
- iii. to any employee or member of the Council”

The Council believes:

1. The latest ‘Order’ from the Secretary of State shows that his mayoralty is not just in a crisis but in a complete meltdown – and the buck stops with him.
2. in addition to the political leadership, the catastrophic failure of the Council’s top professional leadership in Children Services in performing their duties and responsibilities as evident in 2017 OFSTED inspection result of “inadequate” – the worst possible rating, together with, the damaging data breach and leaking of confidential and sensitive council information about a 5-year-old foster girl.

The Council resolves:

1. John Biggs has not done what is required. He must act now to put Children Services back on track.
2. John Biggs must ensure to provide the political and officer level leadership that has clearly been lacking thus far. The Secretary of State clearly feels that John Biggs and the Council have not done what is required - hence the fresh “Direction”.
3. Banish all talk about delivering a Good OFSTED rated service in the next two years but only talk about our intention to receive an Outstanding OFSTED rating as soon as is practicable.
4. That the Council appoint an independent person to investigate individual cases like that of the 5-year-old foster child to ensure that we have full confidence in the handling of such cases while Children's Services rebuilds its credibility.

12.11 Motion to prepare Tower Hamlets workforce for the possible impact of Artificial Intelligence

Proposer: Councillor Abjol Miah
Seconded: Councillor Rabina Khan

This Council Notes:

1. That Tower Hamlets is the fourth largest employment location in London and that 54% of all employment is located in the Canary Wharf/Isle of Dogs' area.
2. That the largest employment sector in Tower Hamlets is in the financial and insurance industries (30%), followed by admin & support and professional services (11%), info & communication (9%), health & social care (7%) and education (6%).
3. That within 10 years, it is possible that [4 million private sector jobs](#) be lost due to automation and artificial intelligence, with robotics taking over roles currently performed manually.
4. That the [roles most likely to be affected](#) are those in finance and accounting, transport and distribution and media, marketing and advertising, which could have a significant impact on the financial hub in Canary Wharf.
5. That in some instances, artificial intelligence could [enhance employees' roles](#), or even create roles.

This Council Believes:

1. That steps need to be taken to encourage local employers, where possible, to offer new tasks to those in roles adversely affected by artificial intelligence, thus reducing redundancy and unemployment.
2. That accessible and affordable re-training programmes need to be created locally, so that those affected have the opportunity to gain skills in occupations that are technically difficult or impossible to automate e.g. care professions, the medical profession, plumbing etc.
3. That marketisation of previously unpaid work could create hundreds of jobs locally.

This Council Resolves to:

1. Place pressure on the government to devise strategies to alleviate local unemployment due to automation and artificial intelligence.
2. Campaign for affordable training schemes for the unemployed and workers whose jobs are affected by automation and artificial intelligence.

12.12 Motion regarding the future of the Tower Hamlets Youth Service

Proposer: Councillor Gulam Robbani

Secunder: 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.

12.13 Motion regarding Changing Prospects Changes Lives – Addressing Knife Crime in 2018

Proposer: Councillor Shah Alam
Seconder: Councillor Rabina Khan

This Council Notes:

1. There were approximately [80 fatal stabbings](#) in London in 2017, [four of them](#) on New Year's Eve.
2. That in the year ending June 2017, the police recorded a [26% increase](#) in knife/sharp instrument crime compared to 2016.
3. That knife crime has increased in the [Tower Hamlets by 8%](#) in the past year.

This Council Believes:

1. That In 2018, the strategy to address knife crime must be from the bottom up, where we begin to engage with a generation of disenfranchised and disillusioned young people.
2. That we need to follow Scotland's example where there was not a single knife crime fatality in 2017, which could be attributed to its [Violence Reduction Unit](#) (VRU), established in 2005.
3. That we should work with local schools in the fight against knife crime and support the work of safer schools' officers.

This Council Resolves to:

1. Work collectively with communities to educate and help reduce knife crime.
2. Work with the local residents, community groups and police to continue to deliver "[Flash Sweeps](#)" to help remove knives from our streets so that a Community Police Partnership model is developed.
3. Campaign for stricter laws surrounding the carrying of knives and sharp instruments.
4. Campaign for [stop and search](#) powers to be carried out through intelligence led implemented ethically and with integrity.
5. Campaign for tougher sentences for knife crime perpetrators as a deterrent.
6. Reintroduce positive activities for young people and fund PAYS activities to combat crime in areas where there is always a spike in antisocial behaviour during school holidays, which stem from a severe lack of provisions.
7. Target those who are at risk of being involved in antisocial behaviour and crime to channel them into positive activities and volunteering, boosting their prospects – ultimately into further education and/or employment.

8. Positive activities need to be funded and administered through grassroots' organisations, who have a relationship with those in need of such services.
9. Young people who might not be aware of, or willing to engage with, statutory services, or who do not have a positive relationship with the police, can be signposted via relevant community and youth workers.
10. Promote schemes and charities, such as [Steel Warriors](#), which recycled knives seized on the streets to create a free outdoor gym in Langdon Park, Poplar.
11. Through this investment, the borough will save money from reduced police call outs, housing associations will save money from reduced expenditure on repairs and the wider community will benefit from having more people contributing to the positivity and strength that makes us very proud to be part of Tower Hamlets.

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

Proposer: Councillor Mohammed Mufti Miah

Seconder: 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.

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

Proposer: Councillor Suluk Ahmed

Secunder: Councillor 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.

12.16 Motion regarding Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets for Residents

Proposer: Councillor Kibria Choudhury

Seconder: 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.

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

12.17 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.

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

Proposer: Councillor Harun Miah

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.