


Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 21 November 2018	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Amendment to Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group	

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

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one specific Motion submitted by an Opposition Group. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The Opposition Motion for Debate from the Conservative Group is listed at Item 8 of the main agenda pack.
3. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for amendments to the Opposition motion to be submitted to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting. The content of amendments must comply with Council Procedure Rule 13.6.
4. One amendment to the Opposition Group Motion was received by the Monitoring Officer by the above deadline and is set out overleaf

Amendment to Opposition Motion regarding affordable housing in Tower Hamlets

Proposer: Councillor Rachel Blake
Seconder: Councillor Sirajul Islam

Added text underlined
Deleted text scored out.

The Council notes:

The results of the 2018 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey show that the second highest concern for residents was a lack of affordable housing with 37% concerned.

This council further notes:

That the Chancellor Philip Hammond has announced that the Housing Revenue Account cap that controls local authority borrowing for house building will be abolished from 29 October 2018 in England, a welcome move which has long been called for by local authorities.

In response to the scrapping of the cap, Polly Neate, chief executive of homelessness charity Shelter, said: "Scrapping the borrowing cap lays down the gauntlet to local authorities to bring forward home-building plans – no more excuses."

Polly Neate also wrote this year that 'our country is in the grip of a worsening housing crisis as homelessness rises, and millions of people struggle to contend with the high-cost and deep insecurity of private renting.'

As well as working with Registered Provider partners to deliver the highest numbers of new affordable homes in the UK over the last 3 years, Tower Hamlets Council has its own ambitious plans to provide 2,000 new council homes.

The majority of our programme to deliver 2,000 new council homes is funded by the use of Right To Buy receipts and borrowing, and the Government's own rules about use of RTB receipts do not allow these receipts to be combined with GLA grant funding within the same property.

It is because of this that the Council only bid for GLA grant for a small proportion of our overall housing programme.

That the Mayor of London on the 23rd October 2018 released £1,029 million of government grants to build new affordable housing in London. Tower Hamlets ~~only~~ received £13 million from the Mayor of London, ~~the fifth lowest number across London Boroughs~~ in a warmly welcomed announcement.

By contrast our five neighbours will each receive:

Newham £107 million
Southwark £89 million
Hackney £45.6 million
Lewisham £37.7 million
Greenwich £32.6 million

~~This is despite Tower Hamlets currently having~~ has the highest housing targets in London (2nd highest targets in London when new London Plan approved)

The government funding, announced in the Government's Budget for 2017, is part of the provision of over £44 billion of new financial support for housing between 2017-18 and 2022-23 although the Budget document and supporting documents themselves clarified that only £15.3bn of this was 'new' money.

That the Government's flagship Housing & Planning Act merely exacerbated the housing crisis, and many of the measures announced within it have been indefinitely delayed or abandoned.

This council further notes:

The Council has committed to building 2,000 new Council homes ~~but~~ and a Council response to an Overview & Scrutiny question ~~defined new council homes as including~~ highlighted that the delivery of new council homes includes:

- The new build programme
- Purchase of s106 properties
- Buy backs of former council homes
- Delivery of modular homes
- Conversion of community buildings for temporary accommodation

~~Also, that mMany residents believe that affordable housing is unaffordable, It is extremely difficult to actually find information on the Councils website to get a full understanding of the different rent levels and service charges so that they have a proper understanding of the actual costs of new affordable housing. and the Mayor's Housing Policy & Affordability Commission looked closely at this issue. Following the Commission, new rent guidance was issued for newly built affordable homes, which means that some families will be nearly £6,000 better off.~~

This Council believes:

That the lifting of the HRA cap provides an opportunity to review our affordable housing targets and to build more new homes

~~That buying s106 properties already with planning permission or already built former Council homes is not delivering new Council homes (it just changes the ownership of homes being occupied by residents of Tower Hamlets)~~

~~That by competing with housing associations to purchase s106 properties mean less money being spent on new affordable homes within Tower Hamlets as housing associations will instead purchase new homes elsewhere~~

~~That only the delivery of new homes which would not otherwise be built and at affordable prices will deliver what residents need~~

That homes bought from the private market by the Council meet local housing needs and enable us to relocate homeless families out of poorer quality, less secure and more expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation;

That acquiring affordable homes through s106 agreements can accelerate the pace of delivery and ensure that assets are not only retained to meet long term local needs but also deliver revenue returns that are invested locally.

The Council's diverse approach – building new homes on Council land, converting redundant Council buildings into homes, buying homes on the private market, acquiring from developers through s106 agreements – ensures continued delivery across a portfolio of programmes, spreading risk and acting flexibly to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

This Council therefore recommends the following:

1. To ~~increase~~ endorse the current housing targets in the light of the additional funding now available
2. To ~~change~~ recognise the definition of that new Council homes should be called 'new' when a dwelling is now available as a council home where it wasn't immediately previously. ~~to mean new property that would otherwise not be built but still:~~
 - a. ~~Including modular homes like Place Ladywell as a way of speeding up delivery~~
 - b. ~~Including converting community buildings which does deliver genuinely new homes~~

~~That the definition of new Council homes does not include buying existing homes or those already with planning permission as that does not increase the total stock of homes in Tower Hamlets~~
3. ~~That in the next round of allocations by the Mayor of London that Tower Hamlets bids for more government grant better reflecting its status as the number one deliverer of new homes in London.~~
4. That the Council will continue to submit to the government a bid for a large slice of the funds available in the Housing Infrastructure Fund from the GLA and MHCLG.
5. To provide residents a better understanding of how affordable housing works and what it actually costs