

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 18 September 2019	
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motion for debate submitted by the Administration	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of 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 the Administration. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. The Administration Motion is submitted by the Labour Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

7 – Administration Motion Regarding the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding crisis

Proposer: Councillor Danny Hassell

Seconder: Mayor John Biggs

This Council notes:

1. There are around 8,000 children and young people in Tower Hamlets who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or are attending alternative provision. 3,000 children and young people have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP);
2. Demand for SEND services is increasing rapidly and services are also responding to more complex needs. Over the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 we saw a 48% increase in the number of children with an EHCP;
3. Last year Tower Hamlets received £49.7m from the Government for SEND funding, but it spent more than £56m on services;
4. The funding from Government has failed to keep pace with rapidly increasing costs, leaving big gaps in budgets;
5. This crisis is replicated across London, where the total in-year shortfall for 2017/18 across SEND services came to £77 million and the cumulative overspend on the high needs block is higher in London than in any other region;
6. Analysis from the National Education Union shows that had funding kept pace with rising numbers and increased in line with inflation, the budget gap would almost be eliminated. However as things stand, the Local Government Association estimates that councils in England face a SEND funding gap of up to £1.6 billion by 2021;
7. The council has responded to the Government's 'call for evidence' on high needs funding and the Mayor and Cabinet Member have written directly to the Prime Minister on this issue.
8. That Tower Hamlets Council organised a cross-party letter from council cabinet members across London with responsibility for children's services to the Secretary of State for Education calling for an end to the funding crisis in SEND services.
9. The recent announcement from the Government pledging additional funding for schools, including £700m for children with SEND.

This Council believes:

1. We face a national crisis in high needs funding, but this crisis is hitting London harder than anywhere else in the country;
2. We have now reached a tipping point: whilst in previous years many councils have been able to meet the gap from reserves or underspending on other education budgets, as other education budgets tighten this is no longer an option. Deficits will now become cumulative, rolling over into the next year and the pressure on high needs funding will rise exponentially;
3. The Government is failing to fund SEND services properly and it's falling to local councils to plug the gaps;
4. That while the additional £700m is very welcome, it doesn't even cover the gap we already face now, nor will it fill the SEND funding gap estimated by the LGA at £1.6bn by 2021.
5. Children and young people with special needs and disabilities are some of the most vulnerable in our society and it's vital that the services that support them are funded fairly and properly;
6. Funding cuts to general school budgets are threatening the ability of our local schools to maintain their levels of quality, inclusive education.

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the Government to urgently invest in our SEND services and ensure that Government funding keeps pace with rising demand, complexity of need and additional responsibilities;
2. To call on the Mayor and Cabinet Member to write to the Secretary of State for Education with a copy of this motion, welcoming the additional funding, but urging him to invest further to bring an end to the SEND funding crisis;
3. To continue to work with school leaders, trade unions and parents to campaign against schools cuts.