


Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL Wednesday 18 November 2020	 TOWER HAMLETS
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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 for Debate - The Government Have Failed our Children and Young People

Proposer: Councillor Danny Hassell
Seconder: Mayor John Biggs

This Council notes:

1. The Government's exams fiasco which saw a large number of teacher predictions for A-levels and GCSE exam results – particularly in more deprived areas – downgraded by an algorithm until the Government performed a U-turn and permitted teacher assessed grades to be used;
2. The exams fiasco caused a huge amount of unnecessary uncertainty and upset for many young people across the country, as well as jeopardising their futures;
3. The Government's failure to continue its Free School Meals (FSM) programme throughout the October half-term holiday, despite the pandemic and the jobs crisis causing hardship for many families who were already struggling;
4. That charities, individuals, community groups and local authorities – including Tower Hamlets – had to fill the gap left by the Government's failure to continue FSM over the holiday;
5. That children and young people have suffered more than most throughout the austerity programme introduced by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in 2010, through the rise in child poverty, cuts to youth services, cuts to school funding, failure to properly fund special needs education, cuts to council budgets, welfare reforms, the coalition's decision to treble tuition fees despite the Lib Dem promise to abolish them, and more;
6. That welfare reforms, including the Universal Credit rollout, the 5-week-wait, the benefit cap, the two-child limit and the Government's plans to scrap the Universal Credit uplift meaning families will lose over £1,000, have all had a significant impact on children and young people;
7. The Government's failures on Covid-19 testing have left pupils out of school when they do not have symptoms but cannot access a test, worsening the attainment gap;
8. That the Department for Education informed some schools last month that the number of laptops they were promised had been cut by 80% after changes to the allocation process;
9. That the Government has failed to prepare and respond to the challenge of the Covid-19 situation in universities;
10. The Government's threat to remove free travel for under 18s as part of a TfL deal, which was rejected by the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan;
11. Tower Hamlets Council funds a wide range of tackling poverty measures, including providing a Council Tax Reduction Scheme with council tax reductions of up to and including 100% depending on circumstances (meaning the most disadvantaged don't have to pay a single penny of council tax), of which nearly 32,000 households in the borough receive some level of council tax discount. The council also funds holiday hunger programmes and provides universal FSM to all primary school pupils, going significantly beyond the Government-funded FSM programme which only funds FSM for some children;
12. That our Tackling Poverty work and other support schemes are under increasing threat unless the Government adequately funds the council.

This Council believes:

1. That since 2010, austerity has significantly affected our children and young people, with child poverty on the increase;
2. That the Government's approach to supporting people during the pandemic – leaving families to sink or swim – is having a devastating impact;
3. The Government has failed our children and young people.

This Council resolves:

1. To condemn the Government for its failure to tackle child poverty;
2. To ask the Mayor and Cabinet Member to write to every member of the council, setting out how Tower Hamlets Council is tackling poverty in the borough, supporting families, and how the council is working to seize every chance for every child or young person to be healthy, safe and successful;
3. To demand that the Department for Education responds to the points raised in this motion, and to warn that Tower Hamlets Council's Tackling Poverty work and other support schemes are under increasing threat unless the Government adequately funds the council;
4. To continue to lobby the Government for proper funding for our schools, councils and youth services, and to continue to lobby against detrimental changes to the welfare safety net.