

Labour Group amendment to the motion ‘oppose the Chinese Communist Party’s human rights violations, agree to raise the Tibetan Flag and rename roads near the Royal Mint site as Tiananmen Square, Uyghur Court and Hong Kong Road.’

Proposer: Mayor John Biggs

Seconder: Cllr Asma Begum

Added text underlined

Deleted text scored out

This Council notes:

1. The purchase of the Royal Mint site in Tower Hamlets for the new People’s Republic of China London embassy building.
2. The number of residents living in Tower Hamlets from the People’s Republic of China including Hong Kong residents. In addition the number of businesses from that country active and investing in Tower Hamlets.
3. The long history dating back to before the 1880’s of the Chinese community in Tower Hamlets and that many people from the region are now citizens of the United Kingdom.
4. The historic ties between China, Hong Kong and Tower Hamlets due to the trade between these two countries, whether tea shipped into the docks or from the trading desks of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (now HSBC) whose global headquarters are in Tower Hamlets.
5. We are very proud of the fact that Tower Hamlets is such an open and tolerant borough where we truly value our diversity and understand the strength that it brings, and where we also understand and appreciate the need to be good partners and to foster good relationships.
6. We remain deeply concerned about China’s human rights record on a number of issues, in particular the appalling treatment of the largely Muslim Uighurs, and the situations in Hong Kong and Tibet.

This Council further notes:

1. Cllr Peter Golds has written to English Heritage regarding the heritage of the Royal Mint Street site the plague pits at the Royal Mint Street site (New Chinese Embassy plans plagued by Black Death burial pits <https://bit.ly/3r9nB3h>)
2. That the Tibetan Community in Tower Hamlets wrote to the Mayor, Cllrs Khan, Wood and Golds requesting to raise the Tibetan Flag on the 10th March 2021.
3. 10 March is Tibet’s National Uprising Day, and the Tibetan flag is currently raised annually by Waltham Forest, Northampton, Woolwich and others.
4. Cllrs Khan, Wood and Golds responded that they welcomed in raising the Tibetan Flag on the 10th March 2021.
5. Mayor Biggs responded to the request with a letter stating that such matters were

~~the responsibility of~~ passed the request to raise the Tibetan flag to the council's Chief Executive who has responsibility for such matters.

This Council Resolves:

1. To invite the Chief Executive to consider under the council's flag protocol the request to raise the Tibetan Flag on the 10th March 2021 outside the Town Hall at Mulberry Place, noting that such decisions under the protocol need to be framed in a thought-through context explaining his decision to Councillors and the Mayor.
2. That Tower Hamlets Council investigates whether roads or possibly new buildings near the location of the proposed Chinese Embassy ~~to~~ could be renamed appropriately as acts of solidarity with historic symbols or place names of Chinese significance (for example as follows as Tiananmen Square, Uyghur Court, Hong Kong Road and/or "Xiaobo Road" (in memory of Xiaobo Liu)), and to investigate what other actions the council could take to show solidarity.
3. Welcomes the relocation of the Chinese Embassy and its staff moving to Tower Hamlets. But that as new neighbours and friends we must continue to make clear where our own standards and principles apply. We believe that it is in the People's Republic of China's own interest to:
 - a. Cease its human rights' abuses against the Uyghur Muslims and all other detainees, and to urge China to implement the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's recommendations in Xinjiang, and allow the United Nations to monitor its implementation.
 - b. We urge the Chinese and Hong Kong Governments to reconsider the imposition of National Security Law legislation and to engage Hong Kong's people, institutions and judiciary to prevent further erosion of the rights and freedoms that the people of Hong Kong have enjoyed for many years.
4. That we in Tower Hamlets, welcome residents of Hong Kong who wish to take advantage of their now increased ability to move to the United Kingdom (even if more could be done). The Borough has a long and proud history of being the first home in the UK for many people fleeing persecution in their original countries. And that those earlier arrivals are now British citizens.