

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 29 th September 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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 - regarding the closure of Poplar JobCentre Plus

Proposer: Cllr Mufeedah Bustin
Seconder: Mayor John Biggs

This council notes:

1. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) intends to close the JobCentre Plus branch based at Dod Street, Poplar.
2. That the reasons for the closure are due to the landlord not renewing the lease.
3. The closure of this branch will result in the removal of a critical layer of support for our residents in Tower Hamlets, at a time when Universal Credit uplift ends, the furlough scheme closes, and the government imposes an increase in National Insurance.
4. The central position of the Dod Street branch is located close to some of the areas of highest deprivation in our borough: the closure will result in increased deprivation through residents not claiming the benefit support that they are entitled to.
5. That access to welfare support is becoming increasingly digitised and those in most need of support are less likely to have the digital capability to access that support.

This council believes:

1. The DWP's JobCentre Plus branches provide vital face-to-face support to residents who are unemployed and/or are claiming benefit support.
2. Within Tower Hamlets, there are just 2 JobCentre Plus branches, both in Poplar & Limehouse constituency, which provide vital support for many Tower Hamlets residents.
3. The recently published "Poverty Review" highlighted that residents were not always aware of the benefit support available to them, and that there is high correlation between illiteracy, digital exclusion and poverty. Face to face advice is often vital for many residents to understand and access the support they need.
4. That provision of employment and welfare support can be conducted in a variety of buildings and places that are accessible and welcoming to residents, and closer working between the DWP, council frontline services, and the borough's advice centres, can only benefit our residents.

This council resolves:

1. To ask the Mayor and Lead Member to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Thérèse Coffey MP and the Minister for Employment Mims Davies MP to:
 - a. express concern at the closure of Dod Street JobCentre Plus, and
 - b. offer support in finding alternative suitable accommodation
2. To call on our local MPs to raise our concerns with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.