


| | |
|---|--|
| Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 29 th September 2021 |  |
| Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Motions submitted by Members of the Council | |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Originating Officer(s) | Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services |
| Wards affected | All wards |

SUMMARY

1. Five motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 29th September 2021
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the motions alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups, with the Opposition Group motions starting with the largest Political Group not to have that meeting's Opposition Motion Debate slot.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. 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in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.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. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS

Set out overleaf is the motions that have been submitted.

12.1 Motion regarding Tesco price rises

Proposer: Councillor Amina Ali

Secunder: Councillor Rachel Blake

This council notes:

1. The Tesco supermarket chain has embarked on a process of converting a number of Tesco Metro stores to Tesco Express.
2. Tesco Express pricing excludes the supermarket price-match offers, increasing the pricing of regular shopping for residents.
3. Many loose items (such as fruit and vegetables) sold in Tesco Express are charged per item rather than by weight, increasing the cost of healthy, staple food items for residents.
4. That some residents have reported price increases of specific items up to 33 per cent higher than those items listed on the Tesco website and available within Tesco Extra stores.
5. In Tower Hamlets, 44 per cent of our older residents live in low-income households, the highest proportion in England and more than double the national average.
6. That Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of child poverty in the country, with, once housing costs are taken in to consideration, 56% of children living below the poverty line.
7. Since 2017, this administration has invested £6.6 million in a Tackling Poverty programme to support: residents moving onto Universal Credit; financial inclusion; grassroots community and voluntary sector programmes; and, several 'test and learn' initiatives
8. Tesco's group sales rose by 8.8% to £53.4bn during the 52 weeks to 27 February 2021, while its UK sales increased by 7%.
9. The Mayor, Lead Member, and councillors across London have written to the CEO of Tesco, Ken Murphy, asking he reverse the covert price increases caused by the store conversion.

This council believes:

10. It is families and residents living in poverty who have been disproportionately affected by these price increases as many simply do not have an option to travel further afield to access larger stores.
11. This position has become more common and acute during the pandemic, with residents restricted and discouraged from travel to protect public health.
12. At the same time, travel costs may now be prohibitively expensive for those who have been pushing into unemployment.
13. That many residents are feeling the triple whammy of the end of Universal Credit uplift, furlough scheme ending, and a looming increase in National Insurance contributions.
14. Supermarkets have performed relatively well during the pandemic, compared to other retail businesses who have struggled through enforced closures.

This council resolves:

1. To write to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee asking that they review the decision by Tesco to convert its Metro stores to Express, and the impact this has on residents.

2. To ask the boroughs MPs to raise this issue in the House of Commons, raising national awareness of Tesco's pricing strategy.
3. To campaign to secure decent affordable food locally.
4. To continue to invest in innovative anti-poverty programme

12.2 Motion regarding One Housing Group Takeover by Riverside Housing Association

Proposer: Cllr Peter Golds
Seconder: Cllr Andrew Wood

The Council notes that in July the troubled One Housing Group, which manages 17,312 homes announced that it was to be taken over by the Riverside Housing Association based in Liverpool which currently manages 58,671 homes.

The Council further notes that:

This followed the revelation that One Housing had recorded a loss of £25.5 million in the last financial year and that the Regulator of Social Housing has downgraded the status of One Housing, which is a serious reputational loss to One Housing as an organisation.

At the time of the stock transfer the four estates of the Isle of Dogs; the Barkantine, Kingsbridge, St John's and Samuda, were all managed by Toynbee Island Homes. In 2007 Toynbee Island Homes merged with the Community Housing Association to form One Housing.

Based in Camden Town, One Housing has frequently appeared remote to residents of this borough. This remoteness caused irreparable damage to the reputation of One Housing when, despite repeated denials, it was revealed that the organisation was secretly planning to replace the 2,000 homes on the four estates of the Isle of Dogs with 8,000 new properties. This resulted in the Regulator of Social Housing reporting in 2013 that, "the board (of One Housing) needs to enhance its oversight and scrutiny of the group's activities to maintain compliance with regulatory requirements"

The Council further notes that:

The original announcement of the takeover of One Housing by Riverside was reported to Councillors and covered in a press release, tenants were not notified by One Housing until later. Tenants of the four estates were initially notified by the proposer of this motion by way of leaflets delivered by volunteers to their addresses.

There appear to have been no other options explored apart from this takeover, by Riverside, an organisation which itself has faced criticism for "taking away tenant's voices."

Tower Hamlets tenants and leaseholders of One Housing have expressed concerns regarding:

- The lack of meaningful consultation
- Inability to produce impact data for lessees
- Poor estate management
- Misleading brochures and information
- Failing to share financial data with residents.

Despite the failure of Project Stone, One Housing have continued to propose redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Estate and before the takeover became known terminated a resident led steering group, whilst continuing to promote a ballot on a proposed redevelopment.

Following a letter to the Chief Executive of the Regulator of Social Housing by the proposer of this motion, to delay the takeover and cancel the ballot on the Kingsbridge development, the regulator has responded to say:

“The matters you raise about One Housing Group have now been assessed by our Consumer Regulation Panel in accordance with our Serious Detriment procedures. The panel was unable to conclude whether there has been a breach of the Consumer Regulations standards which has or could lead to serious harm to tenants.”

“As such, further consideration is required and your complaint has been passed to our Investigation & Enforcement team, who will be contacting One Housing Group for further information. Once our Investigation & Enforcement team has investigated your concerns, they will contact you again within a further 20 working days from the date of this email with a reply or revised deadline.”

During this period and despite increasing concerns, residents have received a brochure urging them to support the takeover with a promise of financial investment, after the takeover.

The Council therefore agrees:

To call on the Regulator of Social Housing to delay the takeover until they are satisfied that this takeover is in the best interest of tenants and residents.

To ask the government that for future such mergers that tenants and leaseholders are given real and meaningful choices including a referendum vote. That residents be offered three options:

1. The recommended merger partner, who then has an incentive to make commitments about their future performance in order to win the vote
2. To join any Council run housing provider (if one exists) which for many estates may well be a choice to reverse the decision they made in the stock transfer process
3. To join a locally based housing association willing to take them

That if the government truly believe in consumer choice and giving homeowners and tenants greater involvement in the management of their homes (as we see in the moves towards Commonhold) that logically this should apply to all residents of homes regardless of tenure.

To call on the Regulator and the Minister to ensure that in these discussions tenants and residents come first and are consulted properly and independently as to the future management of their homes.

12.3 Motion regarding Memorial to the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

Proposer: Cllr Sabina Akhtar

Seconder: Cllr Rachel Blake

This Council believes:

1. We have a proud modern history in Tower Hamlets of championing diversity and standing up to discrimination, but there is more we can do
2. That historically under-represented groups should be remembered in the public realm
3. That the women and girls who took part in the Match Factory Strike of 1888 were pioneers of the Labour Movement

This Council notes:

1. The Council has pro-actively undertaken a review of race and equality in the public realm.
2. The purpose of the review was to share thoughts about under-representation in public spaces – not only in terms of race, but also on issues across the equalities landscape including but not limited to civil rights, workers', women's and LGBTQ+ rights and more.
3. The review asked the community identify and nominate other names, particularly of under-represented groups, who have done something memorable and who we should celebrate.

This Council resolves:

1. To welcome ideas for remembering the Matchwomen and Matchgirls who fought for their employment rights
2. To work with the Matchgirls Memorial Trust to remember the struggle of the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

12.4 Motion regarding Local Government Pay To Council: A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise For Council And School Workers

Proposer: Cllr Rachel Blake

Secunder: Cllr Asma Islam

This Council notes:

1. Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010.
2. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government.
3. Over the last year, councils have led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But the pandemic has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and the Government has failed to provide the full amount of promised support.
4. Local government workers have kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.
5. Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 23 per cent of their value since 2009/10.
6. At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector. The funding gap caused by Covid-19 will make local government employment even more precarious.
7. There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.
8. Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2021 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This Council believes:

1. Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.
2. Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.
3. Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding been cut to the bone and who have not been offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Council resolves to:

1. Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for a substantial increase with a minimum 10 per cent uplift in April 2021.

2. Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim
3. Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.
4. Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign
5. Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

12.5 Motion regardingon Bleed Kit

Proposer: Cllr Rabina Khan

This Council Notes:

1. In the year ending March 2020, there were around 46,000 (selected) offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales.
2. London recorded the highest rate of 179 offences involving a knife per 100,000 population 2Fin 2019/20, a slight increase on a rate of 169 in 2018/19.
3. The ONS reported that more than 46,000 offences involving knives or sharp instruments were recorded by police in the year ending March 2020.
4. Tower Hamlets has a growing young population and has witnessed an increase of violent crime in recent years involving knives and sharp objects.
5. The most recent incident at the time of submitting this motion a teenager suffered a significant knife wound after being stabbed in Tower Hamlets on Sunday evening (September 12).

This Council believes:

1. That every measure needs to be taken to save the lives of victims of violent knife crime and congratulates The Daniel Baird Foundation for its work in promoting the use and installation of Bleed Control Kits around the country.
2. The Daniel Baird Foundation was established by Lynne Baird after her son Daniel was stabbed to death in Birmingham after a dispute outside a pub in 2017.
3. A Bleed Control Kit is a small critical injury pack which contains specialised dressings, a tourniquet, instructions and other specialised medical supplies designed to stop or control the severe bleeding that often follows when someone is stabbed.
4. The public access kits are designed to be used by non-emergency personnel in much the same way that heart defibrillators ('shock machines') specifically designed for use by those with no First Aid training are becoming a common sight in London and the UK.
5. While we still need an effective Public Health approach to reduce the catastrophe that is knife crime, Bleed Control Kits can be another way to treat victims.

This Council resolves:

1. To direct the Tower Hamlets Public Health team to work with The Daniel Baird Foundation, the NHS, Metropolitan Police Service and the London Ambulance Service to develop the best strategy for the deployment of Bleed Control Kits across the borough.
2. To seek sponsorship of Bleed Control Kits from commercial partners to reduce costs of purchase and installation go Bleed Control Cabinets.
3. To introduce First Aid training into every secondary school and college classroom in the borough to increase the potential benefits of any Bleed Control Kits that have to be used.
4. To publicly thank Lynne Baird for her tireless efforts in memory of her son Daniel to establish The Daniel Baird Foundation and hope that her good work saves many lives.