

8 – AMENDMENT TO THE OPPOSITION MOTION FOR DEBATE – MOTION ON SCHOOL STREETS

Proposer: Councillor Kabir Ahmed
Seconder: Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled

Additions in red and underlined
Deletions in red and struck through

This Council notes that:

- Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of motor vehicle traffic in the country, partly due to vehicles travelling through the borough, and the average lung capacity of a child in Tower Hamlets is up to 10 per cent less than the national average. This demonstrates that the imposition of School streets has not directly improved the negative impact of pollution of the children of the Borough.
- The Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027 was presented at a meeting of the Mayor's Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 26th October 2022 which stated in its research that 'studies, including one carried out in Tower Hamlets, show that children's health is being negatively affected living in highly polluted areas. Children in Tower Hamlets have reduced lung function, which they may never recover.'
- The previous Labour administration ~~introduced 26 School Streets across the borough, an initiative to improve air quality for children by reducing car traffic around schools. This policy was largely successful, resulting in a 30% reduction in pollution near schools and there are now 547 School Streets across nearly every London borough. did little to invest in education. They scrapped the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance, and the Mayor's University Bursary, removing the little support that many of the Borough's poorest children had to pursue their academic ambition. This Mayor has reinstated these crucial measures of support.~~
- In his transformative Manifesto, Mayor Lutfur Rahman, pledged to open the roads and get the Borough moving, removing restrictions that impacted the poorest and most vulnerable in Tower Hamlets.
- However, this administration has also demonstrated that it is a listening administration, evident in the decision to retain the Wapping Bus Gate. It will also listen – where there is overwhelming support – to calls to retain the school streets infrastructure.
- ~~After a thorough consultation and a local campaign headed by parents, teachers and young people in the area, a School Street was installed at Chisenhale Primary School in order to prevent excess car pollution and keep the local schoolchildren and residents safe.~~
- ~~Despite the scheme having proved successful with large community support, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets has announced that he will remove the School Streets without prior consultation.~~

This Council believes that:

- ~~The local community has made it clear that they want to keep the School Street at Chisenhale Primary School, and their concerns must be heard.~~

- This overwhelming support for the retention of the Chisenhale school street scheme has not been forthcoming, with a well-organised minority pushing their agenda the hardest.
- That large numbers of residents have contacted the Mayor voicing their support for the Scheme's removal, and that therefore it's removal following the lapsing of the Experimental Traffic Order – which Labour Councillors acknowledged was temporary at the time – is more than justified.

This Council therefore resolves:

- ~~To call on the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to immediately reverse the decision to close the School Street at Chisenhale Primary School.~~
- ~~To call on the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to hold a public meeting with parents, local residents, teachers, Ward Councillors and school children about possible alternatives.~~
- ~~To ensure that in future each School Streets scheme is carefully considered on a case-by-case basis and with thorough consultation with the local community before any action is taken which may cause distress to local residents.~~
- To remove the Chisenhale School Street's scheme with immediate effect.
- To assess all other School Street's schemes on a case-by-case basis and – where wanted – to retain them, if this is the wish of the majority of residents and other stakeholders.
- To build upon the productive meeting with the Mayor of London's Office and other London-wide bodies to improve air quality and educational attainment for all of the Borough's children, not just a select few.