

## LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT TO THE ADMINISTRATION MOTION FOR DEBATE – MOTION ON EDUCATION

**Proposed by:** Cllr Sabina Akhtar

**Seconded by:** Cllr Sirajul Islam

Added text is underlined.

Deleted text is scored out.

### **This Council notes:**

- That education is something that has always been close to the heart of ~~the current Mayor's~~ everyone's vision for Tower Hamlets, since entering public office, and serves as the bedrock for thousands to progress and escape poverty.
- That during his previous term, the current Mayor introduced free school meals for all primary school children from an initiative spearheaded by the Labour Group at the time; introduced the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance; introduce the Mayor's University Bursary; invested millions in extracurricular youth services; and continued and enhanced a community language scheme to promote second language skills across the Borough's communities. Several new schools were also built, including St Paul's Way and Bow School, and countless others were improved as part of the Mayor's £380million Building Schools for the Future programme.
- That Tower Hamlets ~~had~~ has some of the best urban schools in the world due to a strong partnership between school staff, pupils, parents and the Council under the previous Labour administration ~~Mayor's last administration~~, with wholesale refurbishment, expansion and rebuilding taking place.
- ~~That despite this historic investment and prioritisation of education in Tower Hamlets, the previous administration stripped back and reversed several of these initiatives, leaving education services in the Borough under-resourced, lacking in investment and care, and undervalued.~~
- The previous Labour administration oversaw strong investment in schools across Tower Hamlets where the education, development and wellbeing of local children was always Labour's first priority. Under Labour, schools in Tower Hamlets were rated among the best in the country, with 97% of children going to either 'Good' or 'Outstanding' school. This was in large part because of the great work of the school staff and the close partnership between schools and the council. Labour also had a programme called 'Building Schools for the Future' which helped realise the borough's aim of accelerating education across all schools.
- The previous Labour administration also prioritised the health of local children in Tower Hamlets by rolling out the Daily Mile to all schools, an initiative where children run or jog at their own pace for 15 minutes a day to improve the physical and mental health of the schoolchildren. In 2021, the Mayor of London released the latest list of Healthy Schools London award winners which revealed Tower Hamlets to be the most successful borough in London for health and happiness.
- ~~That education in the Borough has not accelerated as it should have over the past seven years. Tower Hamlets is behind Islington, Newham, Southwark, Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Lewisham and Lambeth for the % of students staying in education post-18. This is unacceptable.~~
- That children in Tower Hamlets are so much more than being defined by being sent to either of two universities – Oxbridge and Cambridge – and that the priority should always be the development and

wellbeing of the borough's children so they can all be supported in realising their ambition, no matter what they choose to do. That in Newham alone, one school (NCS) sends more pupils to Oxford and Cambridge than all the Schools in Tower Hamlets combined.

- That many of the Borough's best and most promising students are opting to leave the Borough to improve their life chances. This represents a 'brain drain' of the Borough's brightest and best.

- That, ~~for these reasons,~~ education has always been ~~was once again~~ a central tenet of everyone in the borough. ~~Mayor Lutfur Rahman's transformative Manifesto, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the people of Tower Hamlets in May of this year.~~

- That the Mayor and his administration have already introduced two key pieces of policy – the reintroduction of the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance, a policy created by a Labour Government and the Mayor's University Bursary – to accelerate education in Tower Hamlets, as approved at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on October 26<sup>th</sup>, and it is important that the criteria that is set out for the allocation of the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance and the Mayor's University Bursary is conducted in a fair and transparent way and every child that is eligible should receive the funds and no child who is eligible should be excluded from the process.

- That teachers in Tower Hamlets do a great job in supporting local children during these difficult economic times, and deserve more credit for the hard work they do and less divisive rhetoric. ~~That there is a shortage of teachers in positions of leadership from a background that incorporates protected characteristics, and reflects the social and ethnic diversity of Tower Hamlets.~~

**This Council believes:**

- That the students of Tower Hamlets are among the hardest working in the whole country, and deserve as much support as is possible.

- That despite the best efforts of teachers, students, parents and schools in the Borough, Tower Hamlets remains somewhat behind other London Boroughs in terms of performance and top-grade attainment but has continued to improve throughout the last seven years with a key mantra being that a Local Authority with its schools, backed by a range of partners, can dramatically improve the life chances of its children and young people. In 2021 the average attainment 8 score was 53.9 in 2021 as opposed to 49.8 in 2019 (National data, on the other hand, indicates that the average attainment 8 score for England was 53.4 in 2021.

- That the Borough's students deserve to realise their dreams and aspirations by having access to the best educational services and facilities on offer, and the remarkable transformation of attainment and achievement in Tower Hamlets education has shown local children that deprivation is not destiny. In December 2021, seven schools in Tower Hamlets were named in the nation's top 500 schools by Parent Power Schools Guide, published in the Sunday Times.

- That the students of Tower Hamlets need to see teachers in positions of leadership that represents the diversity of the Borough.

- That foundational success alone is not sufficient – education must be accelerated to ensure that Tower Hamlet's young people can access the country's top further educational institutions.

- That ~~more~~ continued support is therefore required to ensure that Tower Hamlets students can compete with the best performers, not only in London, but across the UK.

- That this should ~~represent a step change~~ build on the strong work of the previous Labour administration in the leadership and management of the Borough's educational services.

**This Council resolves:**

- That the acceleration of educational attainment – from GCSE to University admission – will remain one of the key areas for policy development as part of the Mayor and his administration's vision for Tower Hamlets.

- That to hasten the delivery of excellent educational facilities and services, a cross-party working group will be set up to ~~the Mayor's Leadership Team will~~ oversee the development and delivery of a transformation of the Borough's educational attainment to ensure a fair and transparent process for the benefit of Tower Hamlets schoolchildren.

- To request the Mayor's Leadership Team work with the cross-party working group on Education to set up a fair and transparent system for the allocation of the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance and University Bursary to ensure that the Mayor and his administration do not handpick recipients, and that all children who are eligible should receive the funds.

- That the Mayor and the Council will establish an Institution of Academic Excellence in Tower Hamlets, to fully support schoolchildren in their education and helping them to realise their ambition in whatever University, apprenticeship or career they wish to progress to, while also noting that no one's worth is measured by going to a particular elite group of universities. accelerate widespread admission to Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities, while raising all other educational services to this benchmarked standard.

- That the Mayor and the Council will promote the employment of Teachers with protected characteristics into positions of leadership.

- That Officers are instructed to begin the planning of a project, with the involvement of the cross-party working group on education, to deliver this Institute for Academic Excellence, with a plan to be presented at the first available Cabinet meeting of the Council.