

Emergency Motion on the Waste Strike

Proposer: Cllr Kabir Hussain

Seconder: Cllr Maium Talukdar

Council notes:

- The good relationship between the present administration and frontline workers, alongside the recognised trade unions of Tower Hamlets Council
- The historical work that Mayor Lutfur Rahman and organised workers in Tower Hamlets have engaged in, and the open, frank and honest dialogue that has always existed between his administrations and the Council's workforce and recognised Trade Unions.
- The invaluable contribution that frontline workers make across Tower Hamlets – from carers to nurses, Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers to refuse workers.
- That during the pandemic – in all conditions – the borough's refuse workers risked their lives to keep the borough's streets clean, sanitary, and safe.
- That they often risked their lives dealing with and disposing off used, contaminated Personal, Protective Equipment (PPE), ensuring that residents of the borough could remain safe from the threat of the Covid-19 virus.
- That many of these workers are on the most precarious and insecure forms of employment – namely agency contracts.
- That when these workers marched on the Town Hall in October last year, they were welcomed and listened to by the Mayor and his administration, who acknowledged their invaluable contribution in the declaration of a Waste Emergency the following month.
- That these workers' removal of their labour was not an attack on the people of this borough, but a legitimate struggle against a cost-of-living crisis uncaused by them.
- That the resolution of this strike reiterates the good, healthy relationship between the Mayor, the Council, Trade Unions and the workforce.
- That this has been recognised by Unite the Union, who have confirmed that 'Lutfur Rahman played a part in helping to resolve' the recent discussions around pay.
- That this strike has caused immense reputational damage to the Council.

Council believes:

- That working people have a right to democratically remove their labour through their Trade Unions, and that the recent strike was a legitimate exercising of this right.
- That the result achieved following constructive negotiations between the frontline workers, their Trade Union (Unite the Union), Council Officers and the Mayor's Office demonstrates what can be achieved when respective parties sit down and treat one another with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- That the ending of the strike demonstrates that there are cohesive, productive and robust relationships across the council, and how open dialogue and frank discussions can lead to resolutions and results.
- That where possible, all workers should be guaranteed the right to stable, secure work as and when they want it.
- That Mayor Lutfur Rahman has always looked to secure such employ for working people across Tower Hamlets – whether in the Leisure Service, Care Service and now in the Council's refuse services.

Council resolves:

- To reaffirm its commitment to support the deal struck between frontline workers and the Council yesterday.
- To recognise the role that the Mayor and officers played in the successful negotiation of the end of this strike.
- To confirm the insourcing of agency workers in the refuse service onto in-house council contracts.
- To support frontline workers and to continue to work with the Council's trade unions to support workers in the service.
- To work with officers, partners and stakeholders to address the Council's reputational damage.