

COUNCIL TAX MEETING – 28 FEBRUARY 2013

1) FAIR DEAL MOTION

This Council believes that, for a considerable time under successive governments, the grant which it receives from central funds is inadequate for the needs of the residents of this Borough.

This Council notes that for the coming financial year our grant equates to £1,608 for every resident in Harrow. In comparison the neighbouring Borough of Brent gets £3,317 for each of their residents. This equates to an extra £400 million pounds annually.

This Council is unable to understand this disparity given the similarity of both Boroughs' needs and demography. Further comparison with other London Boroughs presents a similar inequality in Harrow's annual settlement.

This Council notes that although Harrow has an enviable reputation as a leafy suburb but there are pockets of deprivation which a fair grant would help us address better.

This Council resolves the following:

1. That representations be made to relevant government Ministers and officials to bring this matter to the attention of those in positions of decision making.
2. That Officers are instructed to examine the formula that is used for the funding calculation and to identify parameters that could be considered to unfairly weigh against the interests of the Borough.
3. That Officers are instructed to consult the results of the 2011 census and to establish, where possible, a basis for appeal to the government on grounds of the population characteristics and diversity of the Borough having regard to the characteristics of other comparable Boroughs.

Proposed by: Cllr Thaya Idaikkadar

Seconded by: Cllr Sachin Shah

2) MOTION: POLICE SERVICE

This Council believes that the safety and security of Londoners, including the residents of Harrow, is being put at risk as a result of cuts to police service being pushed through by the London's Mayor and the Coalition Government.

The Council believes that the unprecedented cuts are going too far and too fast and that these cuts to the budget of the Metropolitan Police Service will inevitably endanger families and communities across London and Harrow. This council believes that the cuts are being carried out without consideration of the impact on Londoners' safety.

Most inadequate and sham of a consultation undertaken in Harrow by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) has raised more questions than answered. We have serious concerns about the Mayor's proposed 'New Policing Model' for London and its impact on Harrow and raise the following issues:

1. Reduction of Police: There will be loss of 17 police officers as compared to police officers in the year 2010 (Reduction from 402 to 385).
2. Scrapping of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs): Replacing the current dedicated SNT of six in each and every ward of Harrow with only one Police Constable will see the end of the current successful ward-wide policing and leave the local areas exposed to more crime and increase the fear of crime.
3. Base Stations for SNTs: We are concerned that no assurance is given that these will not be closed.
4. Closure of Police Stations and Front Counters: We oppose the plans to close the police stations at Pinner and Wealdstone and oppose the loss of police facilities at the Harrow Civic Centre. The Mayor has promised new and better front counters before closing the police stations but we have not seen any evidence of this for any of our areas in Harrow.
5. Closure of Custody Suites: We are concerned that MOPAC has not yet finally confirmed the future of Harrow's custody suites which are planned for closure. We are opposed to any such closure as we do not believe that the alternative of Kilburn is a viable one.

This Council challenges the Mayor's position that the scale of the cuts are necessary and acceptable. This council calls on the Chief Executive of Harrow Council to respond to MOPAC's consultation and oppose the Mayor's planned changes for policing of Harrow. The Council also calls upon Harrow's MPs and Harrow's Assembly Member to oppose the Mayor's plans and draconian cuts in policing which will put Harrow's residents and community at risk from crime and the fear of crime.

Proposed by: Cllr Sue Anderson
Seconded by: Cllr Phil O'Dell

3) MOTION: FIRE SERVICE

This council believes that the safety and security of Londoners, including the residents of Harrow, is being put at risk as a result of cuts to the fire service being pushed through by the London's Mayor.

The council believes that the unprecedented cuts are going too far and too fast and that these cuts to the budget of the London Fire Emergency & Planning Authority (LFEPA) will inevitably endanger families and communities across London and Harrow. This council believes that the cuts are being carried out without consideration of the impact on Londoners' safety.

We oppose the London Mayor's budget requirements resulting in the Draft LSP5 proposal to close 12 fire stations, remove 18 fire appliances and delete 520 firefighter posts. We welcome the potential for an additional fire appliance at Stanmore fire station proposed in the plan but Harrow will still be fully exposed from the downgrading of the fire cover London wide and therefore the real risk of safety and security.

We deplore the Mayor's legal direction requiring LFEPA to ignore the democratic decisions made by the Fire Authority and majority members of the Assembly Members to enable the Mayor to consult on his closure programme.

We welcome LFEPA's decision taken on 26 February to consult every Borough in London and look forward to participating in the consultation process. This council calls on the Chief Executive of Harrow Council to respond to the consultation on the draft LSP5 in due course.

This council challenges the Mayor's position that the scale of the cuts is necessary and acceptable. This council calls on the Chief Executive of Harrow Council to write to the Mayor of London and the Commissioner of the LFEPA expressing the concerns of Harrow about the closure plans. The Council also calls upon Harrow's MPs and Harrow's Assembly Member to oppose the Draft LSP5 proposals promoting closure plans and reckless cuts in the fire service which will put at risk the safety and security of Harrow's residents and community

Proposed by: Cllr Navin Shah

Seconded by: Cllr Ajay Maru

4) Tory Welfare Reform Act 2012 Motion

This Council believes that the Welfare Reform Act 2012 is causing untold anxiety and will cause great distress to vulnerable Harrow residents.

The draconian measures, such as, the capping of rent and the so called 'bedroom tax' is causing families to be uprooted. Children are having to move locations and change schools which could lead to long term instability and future problems.

These short sighted measures will cause long term problems resulting in high costs to the public purse.

This Council resolves to write to the Prime Minister & Deputy Prime Minister urging them to rethink their misguided reforms.

This Council urges its three MPs to raise the matter in Parliament on behalf of vulnerable residents in Harrow.

Proposed by Cllr Krishna James
Seconded by Cllr Kareema Marikar

5) Indian Rape Victim / Violence against Women Motion

The recent rape case leading to the death of a young girl in New Delhi was a deeply distressing event which has brought into focus the heinous violence perpetrated towards women and lack of values and respect accorded to women across the world in many a societies.

In particular, female infanticide continues to happen in many parts of the world. The fundamental problem is that women are not valued enough in all societies.

In Harrow, this is reflected by a worrying increase in Domestic Violence which is affecting many families.

Mother earth is crying and it is time we took notice.

This Council thanks the former Borough Commander of Police for implementing a Zero Tolerance policy to tackle violence against women and girls and the abuse they are subjected to. But, much needs to be done.

This Council pays a tribute to and reaffirms its support to the voluntary and statutory organisations in Harrow who actively engage in supporting women and girls.

Approaching International Women's Month in March, this Council believes that International Communities must work together in a spirit of partnership to exchange and implement good practices to eradicate the evil of violence, abuse and discrimination of women and girls worldwide.

The Council instructs the Chief Executive to

- Write to the former Borough Commander, placing on record our thanks for his commitment to women's rights.
- Write to the borough's Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations thanking them for the work they do for and with the borough's women.
- Write to the Indian High Commissioner regarding the gender imbalance that has been identified in society and offering Harrow's experience in creating a cohesive society by meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty as published in Our Harrow, Our Story where the Council articulates the services and projects being delivered and advances Equality and fosters good relations.
- Write to the new Borough Commander asking him to work with the Council in partnership to raise awareness of the evil of Domestic Violence.

Proposed by: Cllr Krishna James

Seconded by: Cllr Zarina Khalid