
SPECIAL MOTION NO.3 – ENDING ‘TRI-BOROUGH’

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Max Schmid
- (ii) Councillor Sue Macmillan

The Council notes that on Monday, 27 March 2017 the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster City Council synchronised their cabinet meetings and press announcements and set out their intention to end the “tri-borough”. They gave no prior notice of their plan to the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham despite a meeting of the three leaders taking place the previous working day in Hammersmith Town Hall.

The Council notes that in November 2015, a senior tri-borough official advised councillors and officers in Hammersmith & Fulham that Westminster City Council had modelled pulling out of the tri-borough and proposed to trigger their plan early in 2017. Westminster City Council’s political leadership denied they were planning to do that when confronted.

The Council recalls how on 22 October 2010 the Rt. Hon Eric Pickles MP (the then Communities Secretary) told the BBC that the three councils had agreed in principle to merge all their services and that this could save up to £100m.

It notes that merging all of our council services with Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster Councils would have been a dreadful mistake and:

- The three councils never came close to saving the £100m foretold by Mr Pickles
- That much of the £13m savings the tri-borough claimed to have saved Hammersmith & Fulham were savings that would have to been made anyway and were made by other councils not in shared services
- That the tri-borough declined to formally attribute losses it caused but, for example, problems with just one tri-borough contract, procured and let by Westminster City Council, has cost Hammersmith & Fulham over £5m
- That of the £31 million of savings Hammersmith & Fulham’s Labour administration made in the last two budgets, the tri-borough contributed no more than £200,000, which is less than 1%
- That tri-borough officials complained of conflicts of interests
- That Hammersmith & Fulham residents and their representatives suffered a loss of sovereignty because of flaws intrinsic to the tri-borough
- That there were significant problems with the tri-borough’s commissioning, procurement and management of services that put vulnerable people at

risk and made it difficult for staff to undertake the most basic day-to-day functions

- That the callous indifference demonstrated by the Conservative administrations in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster councils towards children with special educational needs suffering the failures of their school transport service was one of the factors that always made the “high trust” tri-borough model difficult.

The Council notes that in 2014, the Critical Friends’ Report identified how the tri-borough had a “complex operating model” in which “services have been integrated through shared management from the top down” causing structures that are “difficult to navigate internally”. That was a polite reference to the horse-trading, rather than business process engineering, that characterised the tri-borough from the start.

The Council supports the decision of the Labour administration, following the Critical Friends’ Report, to discontinue sharing a Chief Executive with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The Council supports the Labour administration’s pragmatic approach to focussing on the evidence and prioritising services and value for money for Hammersmith & Fulham’s residents and businesses.