

Press Release

For immediate release: 19 October 2010

Some Mayoral Candidates Promise to Put Struggling Small Businesses on their Agenda for urgent Action

On the 18th October 2010, at the Business Development Centre in Spitalfields, East London, four of the five Tower Hamlets Mayoral candidates set out their policy and priorities for small businesses in front of packed audience of small businesses. All mayoral candidates were invited to address the needs and concerns of small businesses in what is one of the most severe recessions with traditional East End businesses being hit the hardest, from market stalls, groceries, textiles, printing, news agents to self employed people. The event was hosted by SSBA (Spitalfields Small Business Association) and was the inaugural meeting of the “*West of the Borough Small Business Forum*”

Neil King, Conservative Mayoral Candidate outlined that “*within the first ten days of my mayoralty, I will scrap East End Life, removing this unfair source of competition to local independent media and generating further revenue for them by placing the required public notices in the local press [and] I will introduce a joined up Markets Strategy, to provide direction and focus for all our street markets in Tower Hamlets*”.

John Griffiths, Liberal Democrat Mayoral Candidate made a commitment by working with others, locally and nationally, to put “*Pressure on banks – to increase credit supply and make affordable loans*”, and push for a London-wide, “*A revitalised economic development agency for London within the GLA, and via Local Enterprise Partnerships – part of the devolution of more powers to the Mayor*” And locally increase “*Promotion of Tower Hamlets’ businesses – niche shopping; restaurant district; 2012 tourist trail*”.

Alan Duffell, Green Mayoral Candidate promised that his policy will “*end the unfair advantage given to supermarkets by the planning system, encourage the further establishment of local community banks specifically tasked with supporting local enterprises - the large banks have failed to make credit available when it is needed*”, and “*specifically allow local business to occupy currently empty premises in the Borough, giving local producers and craftspeople the opportunity to sell their products in a protected environment.*”

Lutfur Rahman, Independent Mayoral Candidate, stated the “*Small businesses are the backbone to our economy*” and as a mayor he will “*as part of the Local Development Framework – Designate areas like Brick Lane, Bethnal Green, Chrisp Street, Watney Market, Whitechapel Road, Roman Road etc. as Business Development Zones/ Districts. This will include the local Markets Strategy*”. And “*improving parking by doing comprehensive review of parking in the borough so that small businesses are provided with parking they need to thrive. This includes looking at the Parking Token Scheme for small business customers*”

End.

Notes to Editors:

1. For further information, contact Imran Ahmed – Programme Manager
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2. Event photographs and Mayoral candidates’ full policies on Small businesses are available on request