

Lutfur Rahman for Mayor

What Lutfur Rahman will do for the Small Businesses in Tower Hamlets

As Leader of Tower Hamlets Council for two years my vision was clear. I want all parts of Tower Hamlets to be a place full of opportunity, talent and economic activity of all kinds.

As Leader of TH Council, I began the process of developing a clear and comprehensive strategy to support and develop our small community in Tower Hamlets. This included series of road-show discussions and consultation with the Boroughs small businesses.

You spoke and we listened. You said that you want continued and ongoing engagement with the Council to develop a clear set of priorities to enable Tower Hamlets to become London's most attractive proposition for businesses, students and visitors. So this our economic development vision for small businesses.

Small businesses are the backbone to our economic well being and under the current downturn and austerity measures, they are critical to all our communities. We are in the midst of the one of the harshest austerity and severe economic circumstance in history.

As your Mayor I will do everything the Council can do to support forums such as yours and work in partnership with you and other business support service providers to ensure we are doing everything we can to support and develop our small businesses. **As Mayor I will:**

1. **Better understand the needs of small businesses and respond with an action plan** to make the different sectors vibrant and competitive. I will do this in the first 60 days.
2. Support the establishment of independent and well resourced **small business forum** to champion the cause of business, self employment, enterprise growth and represent the small business community on decision making bodies.
3. **Lobby national government** and play a strong role in new agencies proposed by the coalition to ensure the needs of our small business community is not ignored, and addressed strategically.
4. We will **Procure Services from Local Suppliers**. The Council spends over £380million every year on goods and services from external suppliers. The procurement strategy I developed was designed to ensure local suppliers have their fair share of council contracts. For example with respect to EU Legislation local suppliers will be sought for all contracts under £25K.
5. **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
6. **Review Business Rates** and lobby central government to set rates in accordance to the needs of our small businesses
7. **Introduce a Graduate and Young Entrepreneurship Scheme** with Business Services Local Partners within the first 100 days.
8. **As part of the Local Development Framework** – Designate areas like Brick Lane, Bethnal Green, Crisp Street, Watney Market, Whitechapel Road, Roman Road etc. as Business Development Zones/ Districts. This will include the local Markets Strategy.
9. Get the most out of the **Olympics and Olympic Legacy for small businesses**. Already under my leadership, I have attracted upwards of £8m for High Street 2012 improvements – designed to improve the businesses on the A11/A12.
10. Fight to keep and support the Councils & other partners indirect **ESOL** provision in the borough.