

PRESS RELEASE



CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

57 Tufton Street . London SW1P 3QL . Tel: 020 7222 4488 . Fax 020 7222 4388
website: www.cps.org.uk e-mail: tim@cps.org.uk

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THE COST OF KEN

*How the London council taxpayer is suffering for
Livingstone's extravagances*

The cost to the London council taxpayer of the London Mayor has exploded since 2000, writes Victoria Borwick in *The Cost of the London Mayor*, published today Thursday 1 February 2007 by the Centre for Policy Studies. (Victoria Borwick is standing for the Conservative nomination for the 2008 London Mayoral contest).

In 2000/01, the average cost of the Mayor to the London council tax payer was £123 a year for a Band D household. This year, it is £289 (an increase in cash terms of 135%). Next year, it will be over £300.

Things will get worse, Victoria Borwick demonstrates, should Livingstone be re-elected. For, despite the Mayor's pledge to the contrary, London council taxpayers are, together with the Lottery, currently expected to pick up the bill of any Olympic cost over-runs. In addition, Livingstone is trying to acquire new powers. His sights are set on a bigger role in housing, planning, health, skills training, waste management and culture. This will bring further burdens on the council taxpayer.

There is already much evidence of waste: spending on publicity by the Mayor and his various quangos has been estimated at over £100 million a year (nearly as much as was spent by the Labour Government in its first year in office); and staffing costs at City Hall have nearly trebled from £12 million in 2000/01 to £33 million in 2005/06.

There is mounting evidence that London's council taxpayers want to see value for money in the public services. The cost of the GLA, running at over £300 a year for the average household in the capital, is too high. It is time to bring the cost of the Mayor under control by implementing rigorous budgetary controls, eliminating waste and pointless programmes and by promoting greater efficiency in Mayoral services.

In an accompanying statement, Victoria Borwick is announcing the aim of freezing the Mayor's share of the council tax:

"On coming to power in 2008, I would conduct an immediate audit of all Mayoral and GLA spending with the aim of freezing the Mayor's share of the council tax in 2009."

NOTES

1. *The Cost of the London Mayor* by Victoria Borwick is published today, Thursday 1 February 2007 by the Centre for Policy Studies. Price £5.00.
2. Victoria Borwick has a 25-year track record in business and senior management. She was group director of the events arm of P&O and also worked in events management for DMG World Media. She was director of the Treasurer's Department at Conservative Central Office from 2002 to 2004. She is a councillor in Kensington and Chelsea and is chairman of the Borough's Community Relations Group. She was candidate for deputy mayor alongside Steve Norris in the 2000 contest for London Mayor and is standing for the Conservative nomination for the 2008 London Mayoral contest.
3. To contact the author, please call Nick Wood of Media Intelligence Partners on 0203 008 8146 or 07889 617 003 (mobile) or Tim Knox of the Centre for Policy Studies on 0207222 4042 (direct line) or 0790656 2202 (mobile).