

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 24 September 2015 at 7.00 p.m.

MP701, 7th Floor, Mulberry Place, 5, Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG

Members:

Chair: Councillor Sabina Akhtar
Vice-Chair: Councillor David Edgar

Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed, Councillor Craig Aston, Councillor Aminur Khan,
Councillor Abjol Miah and Councillor Ayas Miah

Deputies:

Councillor Abdul Asad, Councillor Asma Begum, Councillor Marc Francis, Councillor
Danny Hassell and Councillor Oliur Rahman

[The quorum for this body is 3 Members]

Contact for further enquiries:

Elizabeth Dowuona, Democratic Services
1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, E14 2BG
Tel: 020 7364 4207
E-mail: elizabeth.dowuona@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>

Information:

The Exempt / Confidential (Pink) Committee papers in the Agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact the officer shown above.

If the fire alarm sounds please leave the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit without deviating to collect belongings. Fire wardens will direct you to the exits and to the fire assembly point. If you are unable to use the stairs, a member of staff will direct you to a safe area. The meeting will reconvene if it is safe to do so, otherwise it will stand adjourned.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY
INTERESTS** **1 - 4**

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992.

See attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

- 2. MINUTES** **5 - 8**

To agree the unrestricted minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 July 2015.

- 3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Elections 2014/2015 Legacy** **9 - 14**

- 3.2 Report on Radicalisation and Extremism in Schools**

WITHDRAWN.

- 4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS
URGENT**

5.

- 5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

In view of the contents of the remaining items on the agenda the Committee is recommended to adopt the following motion:

“That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.”

EXEMPT SECTION (Pink Papers)

The exempt committee papers in the agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

6. RESTRICTED MINUTES 15 - 20

To agree the restricted minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 July 2015.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS 21 - 52

The report sets out for Members the details of applicants who have expressed an interest in being appointed to local authority school governor positions at Tower Hamlets schools. The Committee is asked to endorse or reject the appointments set out in the report.

Next Meeting of the Committee:

Wednesday, 9 December 2015 at 7.00 p.m. in MP701, 7th Floor, Mulberry Place, 5, Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG

Agenda Item 1

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Members' Code of Conduct at Part 5.1 of the Council's Constitution.

Please note that the question of whether a Member has an interest in any matter, and whether or not that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, is for that Member to decide. Advice is available from officers as listed below but they cannot make the decision for the Member. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending a meeting.

Interests and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

You have an interest in any business of the authority where that business relates to or is likely to affect any of the persons, bodies or matters listed in section 4.1 (a) of the Code of Conduct; and might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of yourself, a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected.

You must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any such interest, for inclusion in the Register of Members' Interests which is available for public inspection and on the Council's Website.

Once you have recorded an interest in the Register, you are not then required to declare that interest at each meeting where the business is discussed, unless the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI).

A DPI is defined in Regulations as a pecuniary interest of any of the descriptions listed at **Appendix A** overleaf. Please note that a Member's DPIs include his/her own relevant interests and also those of his/her spouse or civil partner; or a person with whom the Member is living as husband and wife; or a person with whom the Member is living as if they were civil partners; if the Member is aware that that other person has the interest.

Effect of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on participation at meetings

Where you have a DPI in any business of the Council you must, unless you have obtained a dispensation from the authority's Monitoring Officer following consideration by the Dispensations Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Committee:-

- not seek to improperly influence a decision about that business; and
- not exercise executive functions in relation to that business.

If you are present at a meeting where that business is discussed, you must:-

- Disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, if later; and
- Leave the room (including any public viewing area) for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision

When declaring a DPI, Members should specify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which the interest relates. This procedure is designed to assist the public's understanding of the meeting and to enable a full record to be made in the minutes of the meeting.

Where you have a DPI in any business of the authority which is not included in the Member's register of interests and you attend a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, in addition to disclosing the interest to that meeting, you must also within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the Register.

Further advice

For further advice please contact:-

Meic Sullivan-Gould, Monitoring Officer, 020 7364 4801; or

John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services, 020 7364 4204

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 1 JULY 2015
MP701, 7TH FLOOR, MULBERRY PLACE, 5, CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON E14
2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Sabina Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed
Councillor Abjol Miah
Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Danny Hassell

Apologies:

Councillor David Edgar
Councillor Abdul Asad

Officers Present:

Robert McCulloch-Graham,	– Corporate Director, Social Care and Wellbeing
Hania Franek	– (Head of School Governance & Information, Education Social Care & Wellbeing)
Elizabeth Dowuona	– Committee Officer (Democratic Services)

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Khaled Ahmed nominated Councillor David Edgar for the appointment of Vice Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the duration of the 2015/2016 municipal year. The nomination was seconded by Councillor Abjol Miah. There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED –

That Councillor David Edgar be appointed Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the duration of the 2015/2016 municipal year.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillors Danny Hassell and Aminur Khan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Para 4.6 on the grounds that they were acquainted with the applicant. They both indicated however that they were able to determine the application with an open mind.

3. MINUTES

The unrestricted minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 16 April 2015 were presented for approval.

RESOLVED –

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 16 April 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair, as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF MEETING

The report was introduced by Elizabeth Dowuona who explained that the report set out the Committee's terms of reference, quorum, membership, and dates for the municipal year 2015/16 for information of members of the General Purposes Committee.

Members referred to the functions of the General Purposes Committee, in particular, Paragraph (vii) of the terms of reference of the Committee the functions which under the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, may not be the responsibility of the Executive and which had not delegated elsewhere under this Constitution.

The General Purposes Committee agreed that a list be devised showing the functions that the General Purposes Committee may have responsibility for which may not be the responsibility of the Executive and which had not been delegated elsewhere under the Constitution.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the General Purposes Committee noted its terms of reference, quorum, membership and dates of future meetings as set out in appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report of the Service Head, Democratic Services.
- (2) That a list be devised showing other functions which under the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, may not be the responsibility of the Executive and which had not been delegated elsewhere under the Council's Constitution.

6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the remaining agenda item contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

Councillor Sabina Aktar
Chair, General Purposes Committee

This page is intentionally left blank

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 24 September 2015 at 7.00 p.m.
MP701, 7th Floor, Mulberry Place, 5, Clove Crescent, London E14
2BG

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

	PAGE NUMBER(S)
3.1 Elections 2014/2015 Legacy	1-5

Report of the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note and comment on the draft Elections 2015 – Legacy Report (at Appendix A, to be circulated)

REASONS FOR URGENCY

This report was not circulated with the Committee agenda and was unavailable for inspection within the timescales set out in the Authority's constitution as it was not possible to collate the necessary information prior to agenda despatch. The report is nevertheless recommended for consideration at this meeting in order to enable the committee to have the opportunity to note and comment on the draft legacy report before it is completed.

Contact for further enquiries:

Elizabeth Dowuona, Democratic Services
1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, E14 2BG
Tel: 020 7364 4207
E-mail: elizabeth.dowuona@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>

Scan this code for
an electronic
agenda:



Committee General Purposes Committee	Date 24 September 2015	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
Report of: Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer Originating Officer(s): John Williams		Title: Elections 2015 in Tower Hamlets – Legacy Report Ward(s) affected: All		

REASONS FOR URGENCY

This report was not circulated with the Committee agenda and was unavailable for inspection within the timescales set out in the Authority's constitution as it was not possible to collate the necessary information prior to agenda despatch. The report is nevertheless recommended for consideration at this meeting in order to enable the committee to have the opportunity to note and comment on the draft legacy report before it is completed.

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer is working with the partner agencies involved in the delivery of the elections held in Tower Hamlets in May and June 2015 and other interested parties, to prepare a legacy report from those elections.
- 1.2 The General Purposes Committee has responsibility on behalf of the Council for certain functions in relation to the holding of elections and the maintenance of the electoral register
- 1.3 This report provides information on the work to prepare the legacy report and the areas and issues to be covered.
- 1.4 A 'work in progress' draft of the legacy report (Appendix A, to follow) will be circulated as soon as possible for the Committee's information and any comments.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee note and comment on the draft Elections 2015 – Legacy Report (at Appendix A, to be circulated).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Elections took place in Tower Hamlets during May and June 2015 as follows:-

7th May 2015 – UK Parliamentary General Election, constituencies of Bethnal Green & Bow and Poplar & Limehouse.

11th June 2015 – Tower Hamlets Mayoral by-election and Stepney Green Ward by-election.

3.2 The preparatory work and planning for the delivery of the 7th May elections drew on a range of experience and lessons learnt at previous elections in Tower Hamlets, including the London Mayor and Assembly elections plus two Council ward by-elections in April and May 2012, which were the subject of a report by the Electoral Commission in relation to a number of allegations of electoral fraud; and the combined European Parliamentary, Tower Hamlets Mayor and Council elections on 22nd May 2014, which were also subject to some allegations, following which the Mayoral election was avoided by the Election Court on 23rd April 2015. A range of initiatives were developed to ensure a free and fair contest, efficient delivery of the elections and an orderly poll and count in each case.

3.3 In turn the planning work for the 11th June 2015 elections drew on further lessons learnt in the process of delivering the 7th May polls.

3.4 The result of the above work was more successful election which have attracted positive feedback from a number of sources and which have not been subject to any challenge.

3.5 A new Chief Executive will take up post with the Council in October 2015, who will become the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Tower Hamlets. The existing Returning Officer is progressing a review of the delivery of the May and June 2015 elections, lessons learnt, improvements identified etc, in order to provide a legacy for future elections in Tower Hamlets. It is considered that the review is likely also to provide useful recommendations for Returning Officers, Police forces and partner agencies elsewhere in the UK.

3.6 The Committee will be aware that The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, in his capacity as UK Government Ant-Corruption Champion, is currently leading an Electoral Fraud Review and has issued a call for evidence in connection with that review with a deadline of 8th October 2015. The Returning Officer expects that the legacy report on the Tower Hamlets elections may be able to make a useful contribution to that review.

4. THE REVIEW AND LEGACY REPORT

4.1 The Returning Officer has held discussions with the partner agencies that were involved in delivering or overseeing the 2015 elections locally, including the Metropolitan Police (both Tower Hamlets Police and the Special Enquiry

Team at Scotland Yard), the Electoral Commission, the DCLG Commissioners and their appointed representative Mr Barry Quirk and others, with a view to drafting a joint 'legacy' report. The Returning Officer has also consulted the Election Agents of candidates at the 2015 elections for their views on how the elections were conducted – i.e. what went well, what could have been improved and what suggestions would they make for future elections.

4.2 The draft legacy report is currently in preparation with a view to being completed by the end of September 2015. This will enable any relevant matters to be submitted as evidence to the Electoral Fraud Review by 8th October and the report as a whole to be available to the incoming Returning Officer when he takes up post. The latest working draft of the report will be circulated to the Members of the General Purposes Committee for their meeting on 24th September.

4.3 The main areas to be covered in the legacy report will be:-

- Context and background
- Description of the elections in Tower Hamlets 2014 and 2015, together with the issues raised in the Election Court judgement in April 2015
- An assessment of the actions taken in respect of each element of the elections, i.e.:-
 - o Joint working
 - o Registration
 - o Integrity measures
 - o Postal Votes
 - o Polling Stations
 - o Verification and count.
- Outcomes, issues for consideration, continuing challenges

4.4 In relation to conclusions and recommendations, these will be presented in three categories as set out below:-

(i) Tower Hamlets-specific issues

Those of the anti-fraud and other measures utilised at the elections in May 2015 that were introduced in response to specific issues that had arisen at previous elections in Tower Hamlets and conditions locally. Which of these worked particularly well; any that were unsuccessful or left room for further improvement; and any that would require revision in order to be repeated in future years because of resource restrictions or any other reason?

(ii) Lessons and recommendations for general application

Those initiatives or actions taken locally that were successful and would be of interest more generally to agencies and authorities in other areas of the country. Also elements of electoral delivery that were problematic despite the measures taken and any recommendations that Tower Hamlets can make for improved guidance nationally on best practice.

(iii) The legal framework

Any areas in which the current legislative framework could have impeded the efforts to ensure an efficient and free and fair election; and any recommendations to propose to government for possible changes to the law, for example:-

- Is the current range of election offences, corrupt and illegal practices still useful and appropriate in the context of a modern election?
- Are the powers of the Returning Officer or the Police sufficient to address the threat of electoral fraud or malpractice, prevent false registration or personation?
- Does the statutory election timetable adequately allow for complaints to be investigated prior to the poll or in good time afterwards; and any fraud to be remedied in a timely fashion after the result of the election is declared?
- What factors work against the swift investigation and prosecution of offenders?
- Is the current method of challenging an election result (the Election Petition) still the most suitable process?

4.5 The matters at (iii) above will be most relevant for consideration by the Government's Electoral Fraud Review and/or the Law Commission's ongoing review of electoral law.

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The UK Parliamentary General Election on 7th May 2015 and the Mayoral and Stepney Green by-elections on 11th June 2015 were conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Representation of the People Acts 1983, 1985 and 2000; the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000; the Electoral Administration Act 2006; the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013; and associated regulations.

5.2 The (Acting) Returning Officer is also required to have regard to the public sector equality duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when carrying out his duties.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Grant allocations will be made by the Cabinet Office in relation to the costs of the UK Parliamentary General Election. The cost of local Mayoral and Council

elections are met from within budget allocations in the Law, Probity and Governance Directorate.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR ONE TOWER HAMLETS

7.1 The aim of the elections project plan is to ensure that the election is conducted in a fair and transparent manner in accordance with the law and that all residents are able to cast their vote conveniently and without interference.

8. APPENDIX

8.1 The draft Elections 2015 Legacy Report is at Appendix A to this report (to follow).

LIST OF “BACKGROUND PAPERS” USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Brief description of “background paper”

Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection

No unpublished background papers have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.