

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 23 January 2019	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Amendment to Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services.
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one specific Motion submitted by an Opposition Group. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The Opposition Motion for Debate from the Conservative Group is listed at Item 8 of the main agenda pack.
3. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for amendments to the Opposition motion to be submitted to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting. The content of amendments must comply with Council Procedure Rule 13.6.
4. One amendment to the Opposition Group Motion was received by the Monitoring Officer by the above deadline and is set out overleaf

Amendment to Opposition Motion regarding Democracy and Civic Participation Commission

Proposer: Mayor John Biggs
Seconder: Councillor Sirajul Islam

The Council notes:

That Newham Council in November 2018 set out proposals to establish a Democracy and Civic Participation Commission in 2019 to look at options for replacing the Directly Elected Mayor system with recommendations presented to Newham residents and elected representatives. It will look at participatory democracy in its broadest sense and models of council decision-making.

That Lewisham Council in July 2018 set up a Democracy Review Working Group to provide recommendations to Council about how the Council could enhance openness and transparency, further developing public involvement in Council decisions and promoting effective decision-making.

That May 2020 is the 10th anniversary of the referendum in Tower Hamlets to establish a directly elected Mayor. Which means that a referendum could take place in Tower Hamlets after this date to replace the directly elected Mayor system with a different system of governance.

That the Spitalfields & Banglatown Town Council campaign has initiated a Community Governance Review to ~~create~~ examine proposals for a new Town Council in Tower Hamlets.

That officers are currently undertaking a review of how the council engages, and supports councillors to engage, with residents as well as a looking again at the Constitution to address some of the issues raised in this motion.

This council further notes:

That on the 1st January 2019 a campaign meeting was held ~~launched~~ to call for a referendum in Tower Hamlets on the directly elected Mayoral system

That 58% of registered voters in Tower Hamlets in the 3rd May 2018 did not vote in the local elections. Compared to 31% not voting in the June 2017 General Election in Tower Hamlets but that despite this the turnout for the 2018 local and mayoral elections was still above the national and London averages.

That social media and technology are changing the world and how we engage with each other.

That the population of Tower Hamlets is forecast to grow substantially according to this GLA forecast.

Year	2011	2020	2030
Population	256,685	328,043	380,598
Increase on 2011		28%	48%

That Tower Hamlets has one of the youngest and most diverse populations in the country with a number of residents not entitled to vote because of their nationality.

That the UK operates with a very centralised political system.

This Council therefore ~~recommends~~ agrees to delegate to the Council's General Purposes Committee for detailed consideration and action the following recommendations. This should include setting the terms of reference, membership and timeline for any such Commission and identifying where elements are already being considered by the council through the various reviews currently being undertaken – for example the constitutional review.:

1. To set up a Democracy and Civic Participation Commission which will:
 - a. Look at ~~alternative models to~~ all models of governance including a directly elected Mayor, including— Leader and Cabinet model or a Committee Structure. Procedures have also been amended to enable councils to adopt hybrid approaches to management which they consider suit their particular areas and circumstances.
 - b. Consider work done already by other Councils including Kirklees Borough Council and Cornwall Unitary Council who have held an independent review of governance arrangements, taking evidence from a wide range of sources. Democracy commissions have also been initiated and undertaken by a range of authorities including Birmingham, Liverpool, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire East and Lambeth, all of which have varying degrees of management ranging for an Executive Mayor in Liverpool to the strong leader and Cabinet model.
 - c. ~~That we will encourage~~ consider options for devolution and the hand back of power and resources to communities where appropriate to encourage greater participation in local decisions.
 - d. ~~That we will~~ consider options to ~~look at~~ extending democracy locally
 - e. ~~That we will~~ consider how we ensure that we take the right decisions at the right level, that where local knowledge is key, we take decisions locally but where economies of scale dictate centralised decision making that we do so. That the Commission will look at how we find the right balance as to where and at what level decisions should be made.
 - f. Look at work done internationally. Tower Hamlets is one of the most international places in the world and in its height, density and massing is becoming very different to even the rest of London.

2. That any Commission working group set up has membership reflecting ~~all~~ major political parties in Tower Hamlets as well as stakeholders from the wider community as well as taking inputs from academia.
3. That it should seek to engage all residents in the process with a particular objective of improving their knowledge not only of the powers of local government but how residents can contribute to the exercising of those powers.
4. That ~~this~~ GP Committee should set the exact timeline for completion following consideration of the terms of reference but that the Commission should report back to ~~the January 2020 full Council meeting~~ in 2020, ~~a year from now~~. That it should include information about the different governance options available ~~through referendums~~, how we can devolve power and resources and how we get more people to engage in local politics.