

Meeting of the

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, 1 October 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

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## SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

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### VENUE

Room C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5  
Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

Members:	Deputies (if any):
<p><b>Chair: Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman</b>  <b>Vice-Chair: Councillor Rachael Saunders, (Scrutiny Lead, Adults Health &amp; Wellbeing)</b></p>	<p>Councillor Tim Archer, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor David Snowdon)            Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Motin Uz-Zaman, Rachael Saunders, Helal Uddin, Abdal Ullah and Amy Whitelock)            Councillor Harun Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Fozol Miah)            Councillor Peter Golds, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor David Snowdon)            Councillor Helal Abbas, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Motin Uz-Zaman, Rachael Saunders, Helal Uddin, Abdal Ullah and Amy Whitelock)            Councillor Judith Gardiner, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Motin Uz-Zaman, Rachael Saunders, Helal Uddin, Abdal Ullah and Amy Whitelock)</p>
<p><b>Councillor Stephanie Eaton, (Scrutiny Lead, Resources)</b>  <b>Councillor Fozol Miah</b>  <b>Councillor Amy Whitelock, (Scrutiny Lead, Children, Schools &amp; Families)</b>  <b>Councillor Helal Uddin, (Scrutiny Lead, Communities, Localities &amp; Culture)</b>  <b>Councillor Abdal Ullah, (Scrutiny Lead, Development &amp; Renewal)</b>  <b>Councillor David Snowdon, (Scrutiny Lead, Chief Executive's)</b>  <b>1 Vacancy</b></p>	
<p><b>[Note: The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members].</b></p>	

**Co-opted Members:**

Memory Kampiyawo	– (Parent Governor Representative)
Nozrul Mustafa	– (Parent Governor Representative)
Rev James Olanipekun	– (Parent Governor Representative)
Mr Mushfique Uddin	– (Muslim Community Representative)
Dr Phillip Rice	– (Church of England Diocese Representative)
1 Vacancy	– (Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster Representative)

**Committee Services Contact:**

Angus Taylor, Democratic Services,

Tel: 020 7364 4333 E-mail: [angus.taylor@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:angus.taylor@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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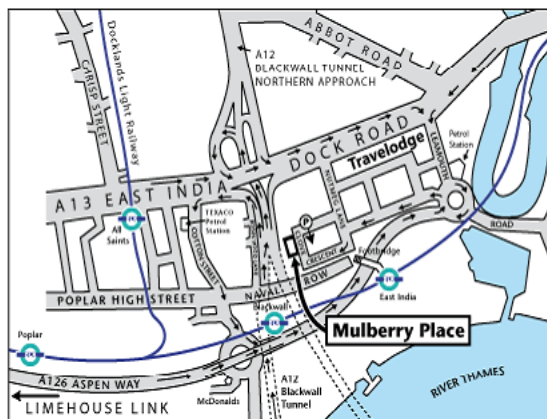
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**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 1 October 2013**

**7.00 p.m.**

**8 .1 Electoral Matters Update (Pages 1 - 30)**

To consider and comment on the information provided in the report.

# Agenda Item 8.1

Committee <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	Date <b>1 October 2013</b>	Classification <b>Unrestricted</b>	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
Report of: <b>Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer</b>  Originating Officer(s): <b>Louise Stamp, Electoral Services Manager/John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services</b>		Title: <b>Electoral Matters Update</b>  Ward(s) affected: <b>All</b>		

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously discussed matters relating to elections and Members have sought information about the arrangements in place to ensure the integrity of the process.
- 1.2 On 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013 the Committee received a report that provided an update on various matters concerning electoral registration and the conduct of elections, and requested that a further update be made to a future meeting.
- 1.3 This report therefore provides for Members' information an update on various matters concerning electoral registration and the conduct of elections as follows:-
  - (a) The Local Elections Order 2013 which confirms that the Council and Mayoral elections in 2014 will be moved to the same date as the European Parliamentary Election (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014); and the election timetable leading up to this;
  - (b) The Polling District and Polling Place Review undertaken following the confirmation by parliament of the Council size and ward boundary changes recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE);
  - (c) The ongoing work in liaison with the Metropolitan Police and Electoral Commission to ensure integrity of the electoral registration and elections processes; including the development of a local protocol;
  - (d) The arrangements for the forthcoming electoral canvass and the subsequent publication of the electoral register on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014; and
  - (e) Preparation for the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration from 2015.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the report be noted

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for compiling and maintaining the register of electors, which contains an entry for everyone who has registered to vote and their eligibility to vote. The Electoral Registration Officer's responsibilities also include registering applications to vote by post or proxy and applications from people who wish to register to vote anonymously.
- 3.2 The Returning Officer is responsible for the management of the local elections. For local council referendums, council tax referendums or mayoral referendums, the Returning Officer becomes the Counting Officer. The Acting Returning Officer has this responsibility for a UK Parliamentary election.

## **4. ELECTION TIMETABLE**

- 4.1 The Local Elections Order 2013 was made on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The order confirms that the Council and Mayoral elections in 2014 will be moved from the normal day of elections (the first Thursday in May) to take place on the same day as the European Parliamentary Election (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014).
- 4.2 Appendix 'A' attached is the combined election timetable showing key dates in the lead up to the 22<sup>nd</sup> May elections.
- 4.3 The publication of the Notice of Election will take place on or before Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014, and this marks the start of the formal 'pre-election period' during which specific rules apply in particular around local authority publicity. Guidance will be issued to all staff and members well in advance of this time.
- 4.4 Consideration is ongoing regarding the most suitable venue and timing for the election counts, given the complications arising from three combined elections and the importance of an efficient and transparent process.

## **5. POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW**

- 5.1 The Council is currently undertaking a review of polling districts and polling places in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended).
- 5.2 The review is being undertaken following the confirmation by parliament of the Council size and ward boundary changes recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE); and will determine the polling districts and polling places to be used within each of the twenty new wards in the borough from 2014 onwards.
- 5.3 In accordance with the legislation the proposals for the new polling districts, including the Returning Officer (RO)'s report on the location of existing and

proposed polling stations within polling places (existing or proposed) were published for public consultation which closed on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September. As part of the consultation process, a Members' Seminar was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. A copy of the consultation document setting out the RO's report is attached at Appendix 'B'.

- 5.4 In addition to all elected members, specific invitations to comment on the proposals were sent to the political group leaders on the Council, the local MPs and GLA Member, constituency organisations of the political parties, the Metropolitan Police Service and the Corporate Director, Education, Social Care and Wellbeing (in connection with the use of school premises). In accordance with statute the Council also sought the views of groups representing, and/or with expertise regarding accessibility for, people with disabilities; and any elector may make representations on the designation of polling places.
- 5.5 Detailed maps showing the new wards, each proposed polling district and polling place may be viewed on the Council's website by clicking on the 'Electoral Registration Quick Link' on the Home Page, or direct at the following link:- [http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/351-400/362\\_voting/lq\\_boundary\\_commission\\_england.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/351-400/362_voting/lq_boundary_commission_england.aspx)
- 5.6 A number of submissions were received during the consultation process and are now being assessed. It is intended that the Returning Officer's final proposals will then be reported to the General Purposes Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and copies will also be available at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting.
- 5.7 New legislation requires Tower Hamlets to conduct an additional review of polling districts and polling places before the 2015 general election. This review would be best timed for the period between the end May 2014 and the conclusion of the 2014 canvass so that the Council can agree any changes in time for the revised version of the register of electors published by 1 December 2014. This review will enable any alterations suggested from the experience of the 2014 elections to be implemented by the next set of elections in 2015.

## **6. INTEGRITY OF THE REGISTRATION AND ELECTORAL PROCESS**

- 6.1 As previously reported, the Returning Officer is currently working with the Metropolitan Police, the Electoral Commission and other partners, to ensure integrity of the electoral registration and elections processes, including the development of a local protocol.
- 6.2 The Committee has previously received a report setting out the background to the Electoral Commission/ACPO Guidance on Preventing and Detecting Electoral Malpractice' (February 2013), the Metropolitan Police findings in connection with their investigation of allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets in 2012; and the special procedures that the Council has in place to ensure integrity of the registration and election processes.

- 6.3 A number of existing procedures are in place to promote integrity of processes at election time. These include an early election agents meeting being called before the Notice of Election and all election agents are directed to the Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct on political party handling of postal vote applications and completed postal voting packs. All nomination papers are presented and informally checked by an appointed Deputy Returning Officer. All candidates and agents are advised to send copies of their nominations prior to official presentation to ensure that any problems can be discussed.
- 6.4 The training pack for polling station staff includes a section on electoral fraud and their briefing sessions include guidance on electoral fraud matters. All presiding officers are provided with a logbook in which they are requested to include the details of any incident which could amount to electoral fraud.
- 6.5 A report on the number of electors over 6 in same property is run prior to an election. Personal visits are made to all properties to confirm residency and update the register
- 6.6 Prior to the issue of postal votes, reports are produced which would detect any absent vote anomaly. The threshold is two for postal votes at an away address and the limitations on standing as a proxy are also investigated and if necessary followed up at this stage. All the security checks enabled by new Regulations have been implemented. Any existing postal voters who request that their postal vote be re-directed are informed that, where a reason has not been provided, the application cannot be processed.
- 6.7 All postal voters who request a re-issue of their postal vote pack are advised to follow a formal process, which includes a signature. This process is supervised by senior election staff. All postal vote applications are scanned and processed into the electoral management system under the supervision of the Deputy Returning Officer.
- 6.8 At the time of an election, 100% of Postal Voting Statements are scanned and verified to ensure the signature and date of birth matches the original application. Spreadsheet analysis is kept of decisions made and reasons for rejection. Opening sessions are observed by opening agents, candidates and Electoral Commission (EC) observers. Statistics on postal votes and turnout at polling stations is sent to all agents post election.
- 6.9 Post election reviews take place with the Returning Officer and feedback is sought on the election process from Police, Agents and Presiding Officers.

#### **Further action proposed and local protocol**

- 6.10 Building on this good practice, the Council undertook a review of local practices to support future work with police forces and the Electoral Commission, including more accurate reporting of cases and allegations.
- 6.11 Specific actions identified include:-



- a) A specific point of entry for allegations with a system of triage to record and respond to within a specified timescale or refer on to the police for investigation.
  - b) Early contact with the police and local SPOC (Single point of contact).
  - c) Preparation of a local protocol agreed by the Police and the Electoral Commission to be sent out to all parties for approval, early meetings to be held with parties and regular contact subsequently.
  - d) The agreed protocol will be implemented effective for the next European, Mayoral and Local Government elections scheduled for May 2014.
  - e) Candidate and Agent briefings to include local arrangements
  - f) Following publication of the new electoral register (on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014), the Mayor, all councillors and political parties to be reminded to request the monthly updates of relevant sections of the revised register to ensure they are using up to date information for registration issues. All to be reminded of the need to use the registers based on the new ward boundaries for any nominations which will be available from April 2014.
  - g) Additional measures to protect against fraud including the 'over 6 electors' checks referred to at paragraph 6.5 above to be run twice in the current year – firstly before the publication of the revised register and then two weeks before the deadline for registration; and
  - h) Continued monitoring of new registrations to identify any unusual activity that could lead to fraud.
- 6.12 Liaison meetings have now commenced with the various partner agencies and the Metropolitan Police and Electoral Commission have been very supportive of the proposals.
- 6.13 The draft local protocol for Tower Hamlets, which all parties and candidates will be asked to sign up to, is attached at Appendix 'C'. The purpose of the protocol is to formally record in writing a commitment by all parties, individuals and organisations involved in the May 2014 elections in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets:
- to work towards a free and fair election
  - to ensure allegations are correctly reported and investigated
  - to campaign fairly, within the law and abiding by the Electoral Commission guidance
- 6.14 The local protocol has been drawn up to enhance the Electoral Commission's Code in order to reflect local issues, ensure transparency of our processes and to address concerns by the public about postal voting fraud and the democratic process. The ERO, RO and the Metropolitan Police Service will sign up to the protocol and it is hoped that all candidates, agents and campaigners will as well.

6.15 The local protocol includes sections on:-

- The electoral register and procedures for dealing with any perceived discrepancies and allegations;
- Arrangements to ensure a secure process for postal and proxy vote applications and to prevent unauthorised handling of postal voting ballot papers.
- Campaigning outside polling places; and
- Dedicated procedures for dealing with complaints and allegations about electoral fraud

6.16 A joint communications plan will be agreed with the Metropolitan Police to publicise the protocol and send out a co-ordinated message that any fraudulent activity will be investigated and pursued.

## 7. ELECTORAL REGISTER AND ELECTORAL CANVASS

7.1 The electoral register as at 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013 indicates that the electorate for Tower Hamlets is currently 169,333. Below is a summary of the rolling registration monthly alterations for 2013:-

MONTH	ADDITIONS	DELETIONS	AMENDMENTS	TOTAL	ELECTORATE
3 <sup>rd</sup> December	-	-	-	-	161,663
2nd January	134	57	25	<b>216</b>	161,741
1st February	4,527	597	316	<b>5,440</b>	165,677
1st March	1,513	359	224	<b>2,096</b>	166,831
2nd April	1,037	516	211	<b>1,764</b>	167,352
1st May	945	475	157	<b>1,577</b>	167,822
3rd June	1,038	584	161	<b>1,783</b>	168,276
1st July	1,326	1,045	273	<b>2,644</b>	168,557
1st August	1,587	891	212	<b>2,690</b>	169,253
2nd September	1,086	1,006	176	<b>2,268</b>	169,333
<b>YEARLY TOTALS</b>	<b>13,193</b>	<b>5,530</b>	<b>1,755</b>	<b>20,478</b>	

7.2 The canvass will start later than usual this year (1<sup>st</sup> October) as the government have mandated a later and longer period for the canvass in an attempt to have a more up to date register before the IER confirmation process after the 2014 elections. This brings additional challenges due to asking canvassers to visit properties on darker and colder days. Canvassers have been offered additional rewards to compensate and to drive maximum registration rates. Canvassers will visit households from 1<sup>st</sup> October to the end of November 2013.

7.3 The Electoral Registration Officer will make personal visits to every property in the borough. This means that staff will visit every household and ask them to complete the annual household voter registration form. This decision was made due to the low return rates to forms that are delivered to properties via Royal Mail. The canvassers can assist residents who need additional

assistance completing the form and can assist with any further enquiries about registration.

- 7.4 Following personal visits by the canvassers, all non responding properties will receive a reminder voter registration form, sent out via Royal Mail, in January 2014.
- 7.5 The legal team have worked closely with the electoral services team to introduce new guidance and policies to deal with the challenge of registering residents in private blocks who are typically hard to canvass. We will contact all managing companies and use our legal powers to gain entry to maximise registration in those blocks. These blocks will also receive their first voter registration form by Royal Mail delivery and non-responders will be followed up by the more experienced canvassers from January 2014.
- 7.6 The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) produces and keeps two version of Electoral register – the full register and the edited register. More information can be found at Appendix ‘D’.
- 7.7 The Electoral Commission have instructed all authorities to remove any existing edited register opt-out choice from canvass forms. This choice, made by residents, prevents their details from being sold to marketing firms and being made available to any person for any purpose. Electoral Services encourage residents to exercise their right to opt out if they wish and are disappointed with the advice issued by the Electoral Commission on this issue.
- 7.8 To ensure that residents have the information they need to register and to choose their preferred opt-out status we have provided a modern ‘Z card’ style leaflet which gives information on the canvass and also informs residents of the forthcoming elections in 2014. For those who do not speak English as a first language we have produced a translation booklet for canvassers so that instructions are available at the doorstep.

## **8. PREPARATION FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (IER) – UPDATE**

- 8.1 The Government announced on 15 September 2010 that it plans to speed up the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) so that it comes into force in 2014 (after the local elections) rather than after the next general election as the previous Government proposed.
- 8.2 IER will be a requirement for any new registrations and all absent voting applications from 2014. As described above, the autumn 2013 canvass will be delayed to enable a later publication date for the register of electors – this will be published on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014 rather than on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013, in order to ensure a shorter gap between publication and write-out and that the register is as complete and accurate as possible.
- 8.3 In 2011 the Cabinet Office took forward 22 data matching pilot schemes in partnership with participating EROs to see if Government databases can be

used to improve the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register. The purpose of this was to identify missing individuals and give EROs the opportunity to invite them to apply to register, and also to identify potentially inaccurate entries.

- 8.4 Tower Hamlets was approached by the Cabinet Office to participate in the data matching pilot due to the relatively high level of turnover in the borough's population. The register of electors was matched against DWP records to identify the match rate that could be achieved. The aim was to improve completeness and accuracy of the register and identify potential fraud.
- 8.5 Those pilots showed that data matching could, in those areas trialled, be used to confirm an average of two-thirds of electors. Based on this finding, the proposal to use automatic 'confirmation' of existing electors was adopted. However, following the full evaluation of the pilots, it was decided that a full test of this proposed process should be carried out in 2012.
- 8.6 In 2012, Tower Hamlets undertook a further data matching pilot to see how far the schemes achieved the purpose of assisting the local registration officer to meet their objective (i.e. that people entitled to be on their register are on it; people not entitled are not on it; and that information about people who are on the register is correct).
- 8.7 The 2012 Pilots matched the registers with DWP records to test the 'confirmation' process at two points in time; before the annual canvass and afterwards. The results from this pre-canvass match are broadly in line with the results from 2011, which tends to support the initial conclusions from last year.
- 8.8 The 2011 and 2012 pilots in Tower Hamlets resulted in an initial match rate of 55%. Post canvass 2012 match rate went up slightly to 60%. These match rates allow us to prepare for the workload required when IER is introduced in 2014.
- 8.9 A new set of pilots in 2013 took on board lessons learnt from the previous schemes, to conclude whether or not data matching is a tool that could assist in ensuring that the registers remain as complete and accurate as possible, both during the transition to IER in 2014/15, and on an ongoing basis.
- 8.10 In 2013, the pilot schemes target specific under-registered groups: attainners, home movers and students. Tower Hamlets has piloted data mining and was provided with relevant data from the following departments: Department for Work & Pensions, Department for Education, Higher Education Funding Council for England, Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs, Student Loans Company and Royal Mail.
- 8.11 The Confirmation dry run was a nationwide test of the first stage of IER, confirming that existing electors on the register match with the DWP database. The test was designed to ensure that each Authority could connect securely to the Government Digital Service and that their system would have

the capacity to confirm the data for all local authorities in the scheduled time before the 2014 IER canvass begins.

- 8.12 The Confirmation Dry Run took place in early July 2013 and Tower Hamlets achieved a match rate of 63.61% on 168,326 records. The full result was as follows:-  
Red – 53,028=31.5%  
Amber – 8,225 = 4.89%  
Green – 107,073 = 63.61%
- 8.13 Subsequently local matching took place, including with the Council Tax NFI records, which enabled a match of a further 9.2% from 'Red' to 'Green', making a total match rate of 72.8%
- 8.14 The Electoral Commission has issued a direction to report under their power to set and monitor performance standards regarding IER. Tower Hamlets must prepare a public engagement strategy for the introduction of IER in 2014/5 and supply a copy to them by 5pm on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2013. We may also be required to supply a copy of our implementation plan and risk register.
- 8.15 The Council is recruiting a senior data analyst who will assist with maximising the number of electors we can confirm and therefore reduce the number of residents we will have to contact and follow up with reminder letters and personal visits. This member of staff will also assist with the key challenge of maximising accuracy of the register under IER and is expected to be funded from grants from the Cabinet Office for IER transition. Staff will be required to attend a number of training sessions on the new IER processes and the IT system used by electoral services that will be subject to major changes to operate the IER process.
- 8.16 The need for a constant link to the Government Digital Service via the government secure internet service will require a review of the IT requirement and service levels for the start of IER in June 2014.
- 8.17 Members, political parties and other interested persons will receive information on the new system of electoral registration to be introduced in June 2014. Officers will liaise with those groups to identify an appropriate method and briefing date.

## **9. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Grant allocations will be made by the Cabinet Office for the first year of transitional activity in relation to the additional costs of Individual Electoral Registration.

## **10. CONCURRENT REPORT (LEGAL SERVICES)**

- 10.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is established by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the electoral review of Tower Hamlets was conducted in accordance with that legislation and associated regulations.

10.2 In carrying out a review of polling places, the Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires that each polling district must have sufficient and suitable designated polling places that provide 'such reasonable facilities for voting that are practicable in the circumstances' including accessibility for electors with disabilities. The Council is under a duty to promote equality for those with a disability and the recommendations of the review will be drafted with this duty in mind.

10.3 Other legal implications and comments are incorporated into the body of this report.

## **11. IMPLICATIONS FOR ONE TOWER HAMLETS**

11.1 The aim of the work described in this report is to secure electoral equality across all wards of the borough ensuring that elections and referendums are conducted in a fair and transparent manner in accordance with the law.

## **12. APPENDICES ATTACHED**

Appendix 'A':	Combined election timetable 2014
Appendix 'B':	Polling District and Polling Place review: Returning Officer's proposals for consultation
Appendix 'C':	Draft local protocol (Tower Hamlets Local Code of Conduct)
Appendix 'D':	Register of Electors 2014 – full and edited registers

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## **LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

<b>Brief description of "background paper"</b>	<b>Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection</b>
ERO Performance Standards Assessment 2012 – Email from Electoral Commission, 4 March 2013	Louise Stamp, 020 7364 3139, Mulberry Place, E14 2BG
Cabinet Office/Electoral Commission circular re: Individual Electoral Registration, March 2013.	

**European Parliamentary, Mayor of Tower Hamlets  
and Local Government Elections****Time Table of Proceedings for  
Thursday 22 May 2014**

Publication of Notice of Election	Monday 14 April 2014
Receipt of Nominations	4:00pm, Thursday 24 April 2014
Publication of Statements of Persons Nominated	Noon, Monday 28 April 2014
Withdrawal of Candidate	Noon, Tuesday 29 April 2014
Appointment of Election Agents	Noon, Tuesday 29 April 2014
Publication of Notice of Election Agents	Tuesday 29 April 2014
Last Date for Registration (11-day deadline)	Wednesday 7 May 2014
Receipt of Postal Vote Applications	5:00 pm, Weds 7 May 2014
Opening Postal Votes (MP701)	10:00am, 12th – 22nd May 2014
Publication of Notice of Poll	Wednesday 14 May 2014
Receipt of Proxy Vote Applications	5:00 pm, Weds 14 May 2014
Publish Notice of Alterations to the Register	Thursday 15 May 2014
Appointment of Poll and Count Agents	Thursday 15 May 2014
First Day to Issue Replacement Postal Ballot Papers	Friday 16 May 2014
Last Day to Issue Replacement Postal Ballot Papers	5:00 pm, Thursday 22 May 2014
Receipt of Emergency Proxy Vote Applications	5:00 pm, Thursday 22 May 2014
Day of Poll 7:00 am to 10:00 pm	Thursday 22 May 2014
Verification – all elections (venue tba)	8:00 am, Friday 23 May 2014
Count – Mayor and Local Government (venue tba)	4:00 pm, Friday 23 May 2014
Count – European Parliamentary (venue tba)	5pm, Sunday 25 May 2014
Last Date for Election Petition	Friday 13 June 2014
Declaration of Candidates Expenses	Thursday 26 June 2014





## LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

## REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2013

## RETURNING OFFICER'S PROPOSALS: CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013 Tower Hamlets Council gave notice of a review of polling districts and polling places in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 as amended ('The 1983 Act').
- 1.2 The review is being conducted following implementation of the recent electoral review of the borough by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), which proposed changes to the council size and ward boundaries for local government elections. From 2014, 45 councillors will represent two single-member, eleven two-member wards and seven three-member wards across the borough. The current review will determine the polling districts and polling places to be used within each of the 20 new wards.
- 1.3 In accordance with legislation the representations of the Returning Officer on the review must be published for consultation, including information on the location of polling stations (existing or proposed) within polling places (existing or proposed).
- 1.4 This consultation document sets out the Returning Officer's proposals. Comments are invited from all interested parties and the general public by **5.00 p.m. on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2013.**
- 1.5 Any comments should be directed to the Electoral Services Office by email [electoralservices@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or phone 020 7364 0872.

**2. THE REVIEW – CRITERIA AND PROCESS**

- 2.1 The following definitions are used in this document:-
- Polling district - the area created by the division of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors.
  - Polling place - the building(s) or area(s) within each polling district in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer.
  - Polling station - the actual room or building chosen by the Returning Officer, within the polling place, where the process of voting takes place at an election.
- 2.2 The 1983 Act (section 18B (4)) sets out rules that apply to a review of polling districts and polling places. The authority must:-

- Seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled; and
- When considering or reviewing the designation of a polling place, have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

2.3 The polling place for a polling district must be:-

- In an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district; and
- Small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.

2.4 In making these proposals, every effort has been made to find suitable alternative polling places for secondary schools, portakabins and where there is uncertainty about availability for future elections. The aim is to enhance the convenience, suitability and practical electoral arrangements for electors.

2.5 Close attention has been paid to DDA provisions whilst conducting the review. Before determining the suitability of the proposed alternative polling places set out below, each venue will be inspected and the results recorded on a checklist, which assesses suitability, safety and compliance.

2.6 Regard has also been had to representations received by the ERO since the launch of the review on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, including from Councillor Craig Aston on behalf of the Conservative group and Councillor Marc Francis as a member for Bow East ward.

### 3. PROPOSALS: POLLING DISTRICTS

3.1 The Returning Officer's new polling district proposals are as follows:

<b><u>New Ward Name</u></b>	<b><u>New Polling Districts</u></b>
Bethnal Green	BG1, BG2, BG3, BG4, BG5
Blackwall and Cubitt Town	BC1, BC2, BC3, BC4
Bow East	BE1, BE2, BE3, BE4, BE5
Bow West	BW1, BW2, BW3
Bromley North	BN1, BN2, BN3
Bromley South	BS1, BS2, BS3
Canary Wharf	CW1, CW2, CW3
Island Gardens	IG1, IG2, IG3
Lansbury	LA1, LA2, LA3, LA4
Limehouse	LI1, LI2
Mile End	ME1, ME2, ME3, ME4, ME5
Poplar	PO1, PO2
Shadwell	SH1, SH2, SH3
Spitalfields and Banglatown	SB1, SB2, SB3
St Dunstan's	SD1, SD2, SD3, SD4
St Katharine's and Wapping	SK1, SK2, SK3, SK4

St Peter's	SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4
Stepney Green	SG1, SG2, SG3
Weavers	WE1, WE2, WE3
Whitechapel	WH1, WH2, WH3, WH4, WH5P

- 3.2 **Bethnal Green;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts BGS2, MGT1, MGT2, and MGT3, plus a small part of polling district BGN2. There are now five new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.3 **Blackwall and Cubitt Town;** the new ward is comprised of current polling district BCT2, the majority of polling district BCT3, part of polling districts BCT1 and BCT5, plus a small part of BCT4. There are now four new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.4 **Bow East;** there are no split polling districts to consider for this ward. However, representations were made by Councillor Marc Francis to deal with the distance residents living in Fish Island need to travel to reach their current polling place allocation. As the area has been identified for future growth over the next few years, a new polling district (BE2) has been proposed for the residents of Fish Island and current polling district boundaries re-drawn to reflect the change. There are now five new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.5 **Bow West;** there are no split polling districts to consider for this ward. However, existing polling districts have been split and merged to ensure equality of property and elector numbers. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.6 **Bromley North;** the new ward is comprised of current polling district BBB1, and the majority of polling district MEE2. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.7 **Bromley South;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts BBB2 and BBB3. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.8 **Canary Wharf;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts MI1 and MI4. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.9 **Island Gardens;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts MI2, MI3, the majority of polling district BCT4 and a small part of polling district BCT3. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.10 **Lansbury;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts EIL1, EIL2, EIL3, EIL4, EIL5 and a small part of polling district LI2. There are now four new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.11 **Limehouse;** the new ward is comprised of current polling district LI4 and the majority of polling district SH4. There are now two new polling districts proposed for this ward.

- 3.12 **Mile End;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts LI1, MEE1, MEE3, MEE4, the majority of polling district LI2 and a small part of MEE2. There are now five new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.13 **Poplar;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts LI3, the majority of polling district BCT1 and a small part of BCT5. There are now two new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.14 **Shadwell;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts SH1, SH2, SH5, SH6, the majority of polling district SH3 and a small part of SH4. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.15 **Spitalfields and Banglatown;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts SPB1, SPB2, SPB3, plus a small part of WE3. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.16 **St Dunstan's;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts MGT4, SDS4, the majority of polling district SDS2 and a large part of SDS1. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.17 **St Katharine's and Wapping;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts SK2, SK3 and SK4. There are now four new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.18 **St Peter's;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts BGN1, BGN3, BGN4, BGS1, BGS3 and the majority of polling district BGN2. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.19 **Stepney Green;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts SDS3, WH3, the majority of polling district SDS1 and a small part of SDS2. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.20 **Weavers;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts WE1, WE2 and the majority of polling district WE3. There are now three new polling districts proposed for this ward.
- 3.21 **Whitechapel;** the new ward is comprised of current polling districts SK1, WH1, WH2 and WH4. There are five new polling districts proposed for the ward.  
 NB: Polling district SK1 (proposed WH5P) is situated outside Bethnal Green and Bow parliamentary constituency boundary. It was therefore decided not to change the borders of this polling district. For the next UK Parliamentary election in 2015, WH5P polling district electors will vote in Poplar and Limehouse constituency.

#### 4. PROPOSALS – POLLING PLACES

- 4.1 The table below sets out the Returning Officer's proposals for polling places within each of the proposed new polling districts:-

<b>New Ward</b>	<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Current/Proposed Polling Place(s)</b>
<b>Bethnal Green</b>	<b>BG1</b>	Gatehouse School – proposed; <b>or</b> St James the Less Church - proposed
	<b>BG2</b>	Globe Primary School - proposed
	<b>BG3</b>	The Tramshed, Digby Street – current; <b>or</b> Rachel Keeling Nursery School - proposed
	<b>BG4</b>	John Scurr Primary School - current
	<b>BG5</b>	Tower Hamlets Inclusion Support Centre – current
<b>Blackwall and Cubitt Town</b>	<b>BC1</b>	Portakabin, Car Park Blackwall Way - proposed
	<b>BC2</b>	Bushy Tails Nursery, Woodwharf Business Park - proposed
	<b>BC3</b>	The Gallery, Jack Dash House - current
	<b>BC4</b>	Cubitt Town Infants School – current
<b>Bow East</b>	<b>BE1</b>	Francis Lee Community Centre - current
	<b>BE2</b>	Portakabin, Car Park Stour Road - proposed
	<b>BE3</b>	Eastside Youth Centre – current; <b>or</b> Old Ford Primary School – proposed; <b>or</b> Ranwell Playgroup, McCullum Road - proposed
	<b>BE4</b>	Tredegar Centre – current; <b>or</b> Bromley by Bow Centre - proposed
	<b>BE5</b>	Our Lady and St Catherine of Siena RC Church - proposed
<b>Bow West</b>	<b>BW1</b>	Chisenhale Primary School - current
	<b>BW2</b>	Olga Primary School - current
	<b>BW3</b>	Malmesbury Primary School - current
<b>Bromley North</b>	<b>BN1</b>	Wellington Primary School - current
	<b>BN2</b>	St Agnes RC Primary School - proposed
	<b>BN3</b>	Old Palace Primary School - current
<b>Bromley South</b>	<b>BS1</b>	Clara Grant Primary School – current; <b>or</b> Lincoln Hall Playgroup, Fern Street - proposed
	<b>BS2</b>	The Lighthouse Baptist Church Hall - proposed
	<b>BS3</b>	Marner Primary School – current

<b>Canary Wharf</b>	<b>CW1</b>	Skillsmatch Centre, Heron Quays - proposed
	<b>CW2</b>	Seven Mills Primary School - current
	<b>CW3</b>	Tiller Leisure Centre - proposed
<b>Island Gardens</b>	<b>IG1</b>	St Edmund's RC Primary School - current
	<b>IG2</b>	Harbinger Primary School - current
	<b>IG3</b>	St Luke's CE Primary School - current
<b>Lansbury</b>	<b>LA1</b>	St Saviour's CE Primary School - current
	<b>LA2</b>	Bygrove Primary School - current
	<b>LA3</b>	Teviot Community Hall - current
	<b>LA4</b>	Culloden Primary School - current
	<b>LA5</b>	Teviot Neighbourhood Centre - current
<b>Limehouse</b>	<b>LI1</b>	Cruising Association, Northey Street - proposed
	<b>LI2</b>	Cyril Jackson Primary School - current
<b>Mile End</b>	<b>ME1</b>	Avery Hill College (Mile End campus) - proposed
	<b>ME2</b>	St Paul with St Luke CE Primary School - current
	<b>ME3</b>	Stepney Greencoat CE Primary School - current
	<b>ME4</b>	Stebon Primary School - current
	<b>ME5</b>	Hind Grove Community Centre - current
<b>Poplar</b>	<b>PO1</b>	Holy Family RC Primary School - current
	<b>PO2</b>	All Saints Church - proposed
<b>Shadwell</b>	<b>SH1</b>	Bigland Green Primary School - current
	<b>SH2</b>	Blue Gate Fields Junior School - current
	<b>SH3</b>	Ogilvie Community Hall - current
<b>Spitalfields and Banglatown</b>	<b>SB1</b>	Christ Church CE Primary School - current
	<b>SB2</b>	Thomas Buxton Junior School – proposed; <b>or</b> St Anne's RC Primary School - current
	<b>SP3</b>	Canon Barnett Primary School - current
<b>St Dunstan's</b>	<b>SD1</b>	Latimer Congregational Church Hall - current
	<b>SD2</b>	Joseph Stern Community Hall – proposed; <b>or</b> Alice Model Nursery School – proposed
	<b>SD3</b>	Ben Jonson Primary School - current
	<b>SD4</b>	Cayley Primary School - current

<b>St Katharine's and Wapping</b>	<b>SK1</b>	St Paul's Shadwell - proposed
	<b>SK2</b>	St Peter's London Docks Primary School - current
	<b>SK3</b>	John Orwell Sports Centre - current
	<b>SK4</b>	Hermitage Primary School - current
<b>St Peter's</b>	<b>SP1</b>	Mowlem Primary School - proposed
	<b>SB2</b>	St Peters with St Thomas Church – proposed; <b>or</b> Lawdale Junior School - current
	<b>SP3</b>	Beatrice Tate School - current
	<b>SP4</b>	Hague Primary School – current; <b>or</b> Stewart Headlam Primary School - current
<b>Stepney Green</b>	<b>SG1</b>	Smithy Street Primary School - current
	<b>SG2</b>	Brayford Square Playgroup - proposed
	<b>SG3</b>	Redcoat Community Centre – proposed; <b>or</b> Marion Richardson Primary School - proposed
<b>Weavers</b>	<b>WE1</b>	Virginia Primary School - current
	<b>WE2</b>	Columbia Primary School - current
	<b>WE3</b>	St Matthias CE Primary School – current; <b>or</b> William Davis Primary School - proposed
<b>Whitechapel</b>	<b>WH1</b>	Kobi Nazrul Primary School - current
	<b>WH2</b>	Ayasofia Primary School - proposed
	<b>WH3</b>	English Martyrs RC Primary School - proposed
	<b>WH4</b>	Harry Gosling Primary School - current
	<b>WH5P</b>	Shapla Primary School – current; <b>or</b> St Paul's CE Primary School - current

## 5. MAPS

- 5.1 Detailed maps of the new wards and the Returning Officer's proposals for new polling districts and polling places, may be viewed on the Council's website at [http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/351-400/362\\_voting/lq\\_boundary\\_commission\\_england.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/351-400/362_voting/lq_boundary_commission_england.aspx)

## 6. REGISTER OF ELECTORS

- 6.2 The revised Register of Electors 2014 will be amended to reflect the new wards and polling districts following the annual canvass in 2013/14. The first register based on the revised electoral arrangements will be published on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014, implemented for the combined elections in May 2014.

6.3 A revised Register of Electors 2014, published on the current warding structure in accordance with the Representation of the People Regulations 1983 will be published alongside the revised electoral arrangements.

John Williams  
Returning Officer  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
19<sup>th</sup> August 2013



## **Tower Hamlets Local Code of Conduct**

### **1 Purpose of the Protocol**

1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to formally record in writing a commitment by all parties, individuals and organisations involved in the May 2014 elections in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This commitment will be detailed below, but in general terms it can be summarised as follows:

- to work towards a free and fair election
- to ensure allegations are correctly reported and investigated
- to campaign fairly, within the law and abiding by the Electoral Commission guidance

### **2 Reasons for the Protocol**

2.1 It is recognised that recent elections in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets have generated a disproportionate number of issues compared to other London Boroughs. On occasion there has been a breakdown in trust between various individuals and organisations involved in the electoral process. There has been negative media coverage of the electoral process within Tower Hamlets, damaging the reputation of the Borough and potentially affecting public confidence.

2.2 These problems led to a report by the Electoral Commission addressing the issues within the Borough. This protocol is designed to address some of the issues raised and stand as a commitment towards a more positive experience in future elections.

2.3 This protocol chiefly addresses candidates, agents and campaigners, but also includes the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council (including the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Returning Officer (RO)) and the Metropolitan Police Service.

2.4 The Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct for campaigners has been sent to all registered political parties in Great Britain, and Returning Officers will draw it to the attention of all candidates and parties contesting elections. The full guidance published jointly by the Electoral Commission and the UK's Associations of Chief Police Officers is also available on the following website at:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/integrity-guidance/electoral-events>

2.5 The Code has been agreed by the political parties represented on the House of Commons Parliamentary Parties Panel and the panels for the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales, and is endorsed by the

members of the Electoral Commission's UK Electoral Advisory Board of senior Returning and Electoral Registration Officers and Electoral Integrity Roundtable.

- 2.6 This specific local protocol has been drawn up to enhance the Commission's Code in order to reflect local issues, ensure transparency of our processes and to address concerns by the public about postal voting fraud and the democratic process. The ERO, RO and the Metropolitan Police Service will sign up to the protocol and it is hoped that all candidates, agents and campaigners will as well.
- 2.7 More detailed guidance about electoral offences can be found at Appendix A.

### **3 *Scope of this protocol***

- 3.1 This protocol covers all those actively involved in campaigning in elections in Tower Hamlets in May 2014.

All references to campaigners in this protocol include:

- Candidates standing at an election, their agents, campaigners and their staff and supporters
  - Political party officers, members and supporters campaigning at an election
  - Other people and organisations campaigning for or against a candidate, a group of candidates or a party at an election
- 3.2 The protocol also covers the Metropolitan Police Service and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

### **4 *The Electoral Register***

- 4.1 Concerns about the accuracy of the electoral register have been a feature of previous elections. The ERO and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets will commit to doing all within his power to producing as accurate an electoral register as possible. The ERO welcomes any contact from candidates, agents or campaigners regarding the electoral register and acknowledges that there will be occasions where the register requires updating.
- 4.2 It is acknowledged by all signatories that discrepancies within the register will occur in any Borough, either due to error or due to voters moving. Tower Hamlets has one of the most transient populations in the country, which causes particular challenges with regard to an accurate register. In addition, the demographic often leads to multiple legitimate voters at one address. It is acknowledged by all signatories that discrepancies in the register do not necessarily mean there is any element of wrongdoing.
- 4.3 Any perceived discrepancies in the register and any allegations arising from voter registration will be passed to the ERO in the first instance to enable an initial review to be conducted. The ERO will endeavour to provide accurate

and timely information regarding a particular address and will assess whether there is the potential for any criminal offences to have been committed. If so, the matter will be passed to the police.

## **5 *11-Day Registration Application Deadline***

- 5.1 Tower Hamlets will include a verification process for all registration and absent vote application forms received after the last date to be included on the April 2014 alterations list and up to the statutory deadline date for the May 2014 elections (7 May 2014).
- 5.2 Any requests for applications to register after the April 2014 deadline will include a requirement for further information as proof of residency to be returned with the completed registration form.
- 5.3 Election Officers may make personal visits to those properties where a response has not been received close to the deadline date.

## **6 *Postal and proxy vote applications***

- 6.1 New absent vote application forms should be sent out from the electoral services office to ensure there is an audit trail of all new requests. A pre-paid envelope will be included to assist with the return of completed forms. Campaigners are advised to provide the electoral services office with the names and addresses of residents on a daily basis. This can be done through our dedicated email address for candidates, agents and campaigners. Campaigners and canvassers should not collect postal or proxy voting application forms from electors for delivery to the Town Hall.
- 6.2 To avoid duplication and unnecessary administrative pressures for Electoral Registration Officers, campaigners should ensure that electors who are included in current postal or proxy voter lists, or have already applied for a postal or proxy vote for a particular poll, do not request an additional application.
- 6.3 Close to the deadline for receipt of absent vote applications, campaigners should advise residents to visit the Town Hall to complete a postal vote application form. Residents will need to provide further information as proof of residency. For those residents who are disabled or infirm, a member of the ERO's staff will be available to visit the address, assist with completion and return it to the office to be processed.
- 6.4 It is important that campaigners ensure electors understand that they will not be able to vote in person on polling day if they or their proxy apply for and are granted a postal vote, and will not be able to vote in person if their appointed proxy has already voted on their behalf.
- 6.5 Acknowledgement letters for new absent voters will include information about voting by post and will include the statutory deadline date to change absent vote arrangements. The ERO will ensure that up-to-date postal and proxy voter lists will be available on a regular basis for candidates and agents.

- 6.6 Campaigners should not encourage electors to have their postal ballot pack redirected to anywhere other than the address where they are registered to vote. Electors must state on the application form the reason why they need their postal ballot pack sent to another address. The ERO will regularly review the list of postal votes being sent to away addresses. Any concerns will be investigated by the ERO's staff.
- 6.7 To minimise the risk of suspicions that campaigners may be seeking to place undue pressure on electors, electors should not be encouraged to appoint a campaigner as their proxy. Tower Hamlets will check the address for all proxies to ensure they are registered electors. If the proxy is not resident in the borough, checks with other boroughs will be carried out.
- 6.8 Proxies should be appointed by the elector themselves. Forms must be complete, including the name and address of the proxy, before the form is signed by the elector. It is illegal for a person to act as proxy for electors who are not their close family (spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild) more than twice in the same ward. A proxy must be eligible to vote in the type of election in which they are voting on behalf of the elector.

## **7 *Postal voting ballot papers***

- 7.1 Campaigners should never touch or handle anyone else's ballot paper. If campaigners are asked for assistance in completing a ballot paper, they should always refer the voter to the Returning Officer's staff at the elections office who may be able to arrange a home visit if necessary. Assistance will also be available for electors at polling stations.
- 7.2 Campaigners should never observe voters completing their ballot paper. If they are with a voter when they are completing their ballot paper, remember the voter should always complete it in secret.
- 7.3 Tower Hamlets uses one-piece mailers to assist voters with completion and return of their postal ballot papers.
- 7.4 Pictorial and written guidance will be enclosed with the postal ballot pack, translated where necessary into Bengali. Campaigners should refer electors to the guidance.
- 7.5 The voter should be advised to post or deliver the completed ballot pack themselves. While campaigners may be approached for help by a voter who is unable to post their ballot paper or make arrangements for it to be returned in time, other options for delivering the postal ballot pack – including relatives or neighbours, for example – must be explored. Campaigners must not accept completed postal vote packs from electors.
- 7.6 For those residents who are disabled or infirm, the returning officer has been asked to arrange personal collections.

## **8      *Campaigning outside polling places***

- 8.1 Candidates should not allocate more than two campaigners to gather outside polling places at any one time. The Police will not allow large groups of a candidate's supporters to gather in the public space or street outside of the polling place.
- 8.2 Campaigners should keep access to polling places clear and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
- 8.3 Campaigners should be careful to ensure that their approach is proportionate and should recognise that groups of supporters may be perceived as intimidating by voters. The Police will be particularly alert to actions that may lead to electors feeling intimidated or influenced. Influencing includes deterring an elector from voting at all as well as influencing them to vote or not to vote for a particular candidate or party.
- 8.4 The RO will also engage Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers with delegated powers to move on campaigners who restrict access to polling places. This will reduce allegations of intimidation and ensure electors have clear access to the polling place.

## **9      *Complaints and allegations about electoral fraud***

- 9.1 Both the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the Metropolitan Police take electoral fraud extremely seriously and will investigate such allegations robustly. However, in order to enable an accurate, timely, proportionate and focused response it is important that a procedure for reporting is adhered to.
- 9.2 The ERO at Tower Hamlets will provide a dedicated email address for candidates, agents and campaigners to report allegations or complaints of electoral fraud or malpractice. The email will be acknowledged and reviewed initially by the ERO's staff and a response provided within 24 hours of receipt. This email system of reporting should always be used in the first instance unless the following applies:
1. There is a 'crime in action' and an immediate response is required
  2. There is a threat or danger to any person or property
  3. The situation is one of public order rather than electoral offences
  4. The allegation is one of a substantive offence rather than an electoral matter, for example theft or criminal damage
- 9.3 All other allegations should be first referred via email to the ERO. This system has the following advantages;
- It enables the ERO to initially assess the allegation and in some cases resolve the issue immediately
  - This allows the police to focus on more substantive allegations
  - It ensures that allegations are not missed or duplicated. The previous system saw offences being alleged via phone, in person, through the

media and Electoral Commission, often leading to confusion and delay. The email system ensures accurate reporting and a timely response.

- 9.4 It is acknowledged that members of the public may wish to make allegations to the police through the usual channels; this system covers those connected to candidates, agents or campaigners.
- 9.5 Upon receipt of the allegation the ERO/RO will make an assessment and will take action as required to ensure the integrity of the register and the election. In the event that fraud or other malpractice is suspected by the ERO/RO the allegation and outcome of the initial review will be passed to the police.
- 9.6 Every police force has designated a Single Point of Contact (known as a SPOC) to lead on election matters and who will deal directly with issues or give advice to local police officers. The Metropolitan Police SPOC and dedicated team are based centrally at New Scotland Yard and cover all 32 London Boroughs. The SPOC will liaise closely with the ERO/RO and with the local Tower Hamlets Police. The SPOC is responsible for investigation of all electoral offences. The local Tower Hamlets Police are responsible for all public order issues generated by the election, policing of the polling stations, the investigation of other offences connected to the election (threats, assaults and other frauds for example). Through the Safer Neighbourhood Teams Tower Hamlets Police have responsibility for, and knowledge of, local community issues.
- 9.7 The ERO will initially pass any allegations they believe warrant police referral to the local Tower Hamlets Police. This is firstly in order to ensure a timely response as the SPOC officers do not provide a 24 hour cover. It will also ensure a crime reference is generated and the allegation will be allocated to the most appropriate department. If the allegation concerns electoral fraud or electoral malpractice SPOC officers will thoroughly investigate.
- 9.8 It is acknowledged that there has been a perception of lack of communication from the Police with regard to allegations. If the process outlined above is followed the SPOC commits to contacting the complainant at the earliest opportunity and outlining the investigative strategy. There will be regular communication between the SPOC and the complainant throughout the process, with a full update being provided at the conclusion of the investigation.
- 9.9 The police will thoroughly investigate allegations where someone is prepared to provide evidence or a statement in support of the complaint. Unsubstantiated claims about electoral fraud have the potential to damage confidence in the integrity of the electoral process and damage the reputation of politics as a whole. Campaigners should ensure they are confident that evidence can be provided to the police before considering whether it is appropriate to publicise any specific allegation. This protocol will be widely publicised within local media and is intended to demonstrate how all individuals and organisations are committed to accurate reporting of allegations.

**10 Electoral Commission Statement**

10.1 The Returning Officer of Tower Hamlets and the Metropolitan Police Service are working hard to ensure that the elections in the borough are run in a fair and transparent way in accordance with electoral law. The Electoral Commission supports the steps taken by this local partnership to address the concerns of electors, campaigners and candidates in the borough. This local protocol is a commitment by all signatories to uphold the integrity of the electoral process in Tower Hamlets, to which the Commission lends its support. We will continue to carefully monitor the steps taken by all those involved in elections within the borough.

**11 Compliance with this protocol**

11.1 Any concerns that this protocol has been breached should be raised first with the ERO / RO who will mediate in any dispute. This does not impact upon the right of all parties to campaign in lawful and usual ways.

11.2 Any concerns following the initial review by the ERO/RO may be drawn to the attention of the Electoral Commission. The Commission will raise them with the relevant party or campaigner if appropriate, and will agree appropriate actions to remedy or prevent a reoccurrence of any breach.

11.3 Signatories below commit to abide by the ethos and specifics of this protocol:

Name	Role / Organisation / Party
------	-----------------------------

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

Signed:.....

**Agreed and effective from December 2013**





# Register of Electors 2014

## The Full and Edited Registers

The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) produces and keeps two versions of the Electoral Register – the full register and the edited register. The annual revised register will be published by 17 February 2014.

## The Full Register

The full register lists everyone who is entitled to vote. You can view the register by contacting the Electoral Service Office on 020 7364 0872.

Only certain people and organisations can have copies of the full register, and they can only use it for specified purposes. These include electoral and law enforcement purposes, public inspection, and credit referencing. A copy of the full register is available for inspection, by appointment and under supervision, at the Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clive Crescent, London E14 2BG between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. The information contained in the register may be copied only by taking handwritten notes.

The law says who can have a copy of the full register and what they can use it for. The full list of such persons and purposes is given in the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended). It is a criminal offence to use the full register for purposes other than for any statutory reason by which it was supplied.

## The Edited Register

The edited register leaves out the names and addresses of people who have asked for their details to be omitted from that version of the register. The edited register is available for sale to anyone who asks for a copy and they may use it for any purpose. You can view the edited register at any library or flea store in the Borough. The information contained in the register may be copied only by taking handwritten notes.

