

# General Purposes Committee

**Tuesday, 13 June 2023 at 6.30 p.m.  
Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall,  
160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ**

## Supplemental Agenda

**5 .3 Update on Elections Act 2022 (Pages 3 - 22)**

**6 .1 Appointment of Member to the Corporate Parenting Board (Pages 23 - 26)**

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Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>General Purpose Committee</b>  Tuesday 13 June 2023	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Janet Fasan – Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Update on Elections Act 2022</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Robert Curtis, Head of Electoral Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

## Reasons justifying urgent consideration

The report is an information item only and does not require a decision. IT issues and administrative error contributed to its late publication.

Some of the requirements of the Act are now in place and will start to apply if we had unscheduled polls or a General Election were to be called. It was also recommended by DLUHC that members are briefed on the requirements. Accordingly, it is considered important that the Committee is briefed at this, as opposed to the scheduled 28 September 2023 meeting.

## Executive Summary

- 1.1. Following the introduction of the Elections Act 2022 the implications for the electorate of Tower Hamlets, political representatives and elected members is significant.
- 1.2. General Purpose Committee is asked to note where elements of the Act have already been implemented, future changes and the implications.
- 1.3. Comprehensive guidance continues to be provided by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Electoral Commission for administrators, Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, the electorate, political parties, elected members, and future candidates.
- 1.4. In some circumstances statutory instruments have yet to be approved and clarification of process continue to be updated as the incremental introduction of the various stages of the Act take place and are subsequently implemented.

## **Recommendations:**

General Purpose Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the requirements already implemented by the Elections Act 2022 and the implications of future scheduled changes.

### **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 This report is for information to be noted

### **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 N/A

### **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1. The UK government has implemented significant changes following the Elections Act 2022.
- 3.2 The Act received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and makes a range of changes that present numerous challenges to the Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and electoral administrators and will impact on political parties, campaigners, and the electorate of Tower Hamlets.
- 3.3 The Act is comprehensive but is not being implemented in a single publication with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) developing a rolling programme of secondary legislation, and statutory instruments to implement the various changes. In addition, guidance will set out the necessary processes that will have to be followed as the deadline for each change approaches.
- 3.4 A timetable of the implementation of the incremental introduction of the Act is detailed in **Appendix A** but could vary slightly as each phase of introduction is introduced.
- 3.5 The Act applies to the following election types here in Tower Hamlets.
  - UK Parliamentary elections in Great Britain
  - Local Elections in England including Mayoral elections.
- 3.6 The Act seeks to improve the security, accessibility and transparency of elections and campaigning and the changes will require additional administrative resource and extensive training as it is phased in over the next few years. The scale of change must not be underestimated.
- 3.7 A summary of the changes are attached at **Appendix B** and include:
  - All electors, who vote at a polling station, will be required to show an approved form of photographic identification before they receive their ballot paper/s and if accepted the elector can then cast their vote. There are no exceptions to this requirement and will also include those who are registered as anonymous electors.

- Those unable to provide any of the photographic ID can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) This can be applied for online, in person at the Town Hall or a paper application submitted to the ERO.
- Changes to absent voting
- Accessibility at polling stations
- Rights of EU citizens for voting and candidacy
- Overseas electors
- Changes to the voting systems
- Preventing undue influence

### 3.8 The preparations have included thus far.

- A presentation has been delivered separately to the main 5 political party representatives here in Tower Hamlets. It is hoped that this information will have permeated through to existing Cllrs through the political groups.
- Detailed information and links to the Electoral Commissions and DLUHC web sites have been posted on the Councils website here.  
[https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/council\\_and\\_democracy/elections\\_voting/Elections-Act-2022.aspx](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/council_and_democracy/elections_voting/Elections-Act-2022.aspx)
- Meetings have been held with the Interim CEO, Communications, Facilities Management, and IT to prepare for the changes.
- VAC certificates have been successfully processed and distributed via the Government's portal and applications received in person in the Town Hall. (To date more than 160 applications have been received)
- Comprehensive planning is taking place with the GLA for the polls to be held on Thursday 2 May 2024 and the potential of a General Election being held on the same day.
- Planning is also taking place in the event of a General Election being held as a standalone poll prior to January 2025.
- The initial requirements of the Act were implemented across the UK at polls held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The Head of Service was appointed as an Electoral Commission Accredited Observer and attended polling places in Windsor and Maidenhead to witness the initial requirements of the Act in situ, namely Voter ID, privacy areas and accessibility in polling stations.
- Observation also took place at the count held on that evening to see if there were any implications from polling day.
- Visits will also take place to observe by elections being held in other council areas in London in the coming months.
- It is anticipated following the polls held on Thursday 4 May 2023 that evidence of good practice will be adopted and where implementation proved successful across the UK that this will be disseminated to all RO's and ERO's once the final analysis

has been completed by Government, The Commission, and the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA).

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Concern has been expressed nationally that many members of the electorate have been disenfranchised and have not attended or have been turned away from polling stations because they did not have the necessary documentation to satisfy the Voter ID requirements.
- 4.2 The data of how many electors were alleged to have been disenfranchised, perceived deficiencies of the process but also good practice from the first polls held on Thursday 4 May 2023 is currently being compiled by DLUHC and the Electoral Commission and will be available in due course.

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 The additional costs incurred in implementing the requirements of the Elections Act 2022 will be funded by the Government, as detailed in the attached **Appendix C**
- 6.2 To date Tower Hamlets has received the following grants from DLUHC
- 22/23 - £10,300
  - 23/24 - £6,306

#### **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 No specific implications have been identified.

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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- NONE

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix A - Key Events
- Appendix B - Elections Act Summary

- Appendix C – DLUHC New Burdens Funding

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

**List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report.**

- NONE

**Officer contact details for documents:**

- N/A

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# Elections Act 2022

## Timetable of events through to 2027

Timetable	Requirement	Task
From 16/01/2023	Elections Act 2022	Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) The Governments Web Portal goes live to enable electors who declare they do not have photographic ID to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) to use in the polling station. The certificate is free of charge.
Within two months of Monday 16/01/2023	Elections Act 2022	To write out to all Anonymous electors - EROs are required to notify all existing qualifying anonymous electors on their register who do not have a postal vote set up of the new requirement to have an Anonymous Elector's Document. This must be completed within two months of The Voter Identification Regulations 2022 coming into force (16 March 2023).
From Thursday 04/05/2023	Elections Act 2022	Requires voters to show photo ID at polling stations before a ballot paper is issued this implemented for the first time.  This applies to all relevant polls except for a UK Parliamentary General Election where this provision doesn't apply until 5 October 2023. It does apply for any UK Parliamentary by-elections held from May 2023 until 5 October 2023.
From Thursday 04/05/2023	Elections Act 2022	Accessibility in polling stations is extended requiring Returning Officers to take all reasonable steps to provide support for voters with a disability in polling stations
From Thursday 04/05/2023	Elections	The number of subscribers will be reduced on a nomination paper for principal area elections in England from 10 to 2.  This amendment comes into effect for scheduled elections and by-elections on or after 4 May 2023.
From Thursday 04/05/2023	Elections Act 2022	The voting system used for the election of the Mayor of London and local authority Mayor has been changed from the Supplementary Vote to First Past the Post for polls taking place on or after 4 May 2023. This will apply to the local election polls in 2026 in Tower Hamlets.
August - October 2023	Elections Act 2022	Subject to secondary legislation and statutory instruments the following changes are expected to be in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'fifteen-year rule' to qualify to register as an Overseas elector will be scrapped to allow all British citizens living overseas to vote in UK Parliamentary elections, regardless of when they left the UK. The statutory instruments will be made for the changes to take place in January 2024.</li> <li>Electors will be able apply online for an absent vote, with both online and paper applications with an additional requirement that the applicant's identity is verified in a similar way to an application to register to vote. This is expected to be implemented in October 2023 subject to statutory instrument.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All postal voters will be required to reapply for a new absent vote every three years, replacing current rules that only require the refreshing of signatures every five years.</li> <li>• Further limits will be applied relating to the number of people someone may act as proxy for.</li> <li>• Voter identification comes into force for UK Parliamentary General Elections held on or after 5 October.</li> </ul>
November 2023	Elections Act 2022	<p>Subject to secondary legislation and statutory instruments the following changes are expected to be in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of the extension to the rules relating to undue influence (Corrupt practice)</li> <li>• new electoral statutory instruments and sanctions for intimidation come into effect.</li> <li>• a new regime relating to digital imprints on campaign literature takes effect.</li> <li>• commonly known names and addresses will be extended and will apply from May 2024 polls.</li> </ul>
December 2023	Elections Act 2022	<p>Subject to statutory instruments being made the following change is expected to be in place <b>after</b> the May 2024 polls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU citizen's voting and candidacy rights (EUVCR) – this will be the removal of ineligible EU nationals on publication of revised register</li> </ul>
January 2024	Elections Act 2022	<p>Subject to secondary legislation the following transitional arrangements are expected to be in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require postal voters to reapply every three years, replacing current rules of refreshing their signature every five years</li> </ul>
From Thursday 02/05/2024	Elections Act 2022	<p>The following changes are expected to be in place for elections from May 2024 after statutory instruments made in December 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restrictions to the handling of postal votes, including limiting the number of postal votes an individual can hand into the polling stations and to the Returning Officer.</li> <li>• absent vote secrecy- the secrecy of the ballot requirements in polling stations extended to absent voting.</li> <li>• changes to candidates addresses come into force.</li> <li>• changes to commonly used names come into force</li> </ul>
Thursday 02/05/2024 (Polling Day)	GLA	<p>GLA polls to take place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mayor of London</li> <li>• 14 members of the London Assembly that represent London's 14 Constituencies</li> <li>• 11 Assembly members (London wide)</li> </ul> <p>TH is in the City &amp; East Constituency with Newham the lead authority, Barking &amp; Dagenham, and the City of London.</p>

		The RO for TH will be the Borough Returning Officer (BRO) with a Memorandum of Understanding agreed with the Newham CRO.
After Thursday 02/05/2024	Elections Act 2022	Subject to secondary legislation the following change is expected to be in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>change voting and candidacy arrangements for EU voters (EUVCR)</li> </ul>
January 2025	Elections Act 2022	Subject to secondary legislation the following transitional arrangements are expected to be in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU citizen's voting and candidacy rights (EUVCR) – implementation completed ahead of May 2025 polls.</li> <li>require postal voters to reapply every three years, replacing current rules of refreshing their signature every five years</li> </ul>
Must be held by 28/01/2025	General Election	UK Parliamentary General Election – can be held at any point following the repeal of Fixed Term Parliament Act but no later than 28 January 2025
January 2026	Elections Act 2022	Subject to secondary legislation the following transitional arrangements are expected to be in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require postal voters to reapply every three years, replacing current rules of refreshing their signature every five years (reserved polls)</li> <li>This will be an annual process</li> </ul>
Thursday 07/05/2026	Elections	Borough Ward elections and Local Authority Mayor under the new counting system of First Past the Post
January 2027	Elections Act 2022	Subject to secondary legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require postal voters to reapply every three years, replacing current rules of refreshing their signature every five years (reserved polls)</li> </ul>

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## Summary of the Elections Act 2022

### Introduction

The UK government has implemented significant changes to the current electoral system.

The Elections Act 2022 outlines measures which will affect the way that electors in Tower Hamlets will exercise their right to vote and how elections are conducted in Tower Hamlets.

In addition, the Act also contains measures that affect,

- campaigning and the rules on campaign spending and funding and
- the parliamentary oversight of the Electoral Commission

Arguably, the biggest change is the requirement for electors to show photographic identification (such as a passport or drivers' licence) when they vote at a polling station.

Below is a summary of the changes with further information due to be published throughout 2023 into 2024 by DLUHC supported by the Electoral Commission and Association of Electoral Administrators.

It should be noted that the changes are incremental with policy, statutory instruments and secondary legislation being drafted and approved as the timetable of introduction progresses.

The first changes came into force at local elections held on Thursday 4 May 2023 and some of the requirements will apply to Tower Hamlets from that date.

More information about the Elections Act 2022 can be found here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greater-protections-for-voters-as-governments-elections-bill-achieves-royal-assent>

### Voter ID

All electors, who vote at a polling station, will be required to show an accepted form of photographic identification from Thursday 4 May 2023 before they receive a ballot paper and then cast their vote.

There are no exceptions to this requirement and will also include those who are registered as anonymous electors.

If a person is acting as a proxy for an elector, ID will also need to be shown by the proxy but will not have to be shown for the person who has appointed the proxy.

Verification of identity will also be introduced for postal voters, and people appointing a proxy in the summer of 2023.

### Acceptable forms of identification

Accepted forms of identification are set out in Schedule 1 of the Elections Act 2022.

This list includes 'an electoral identity document' issued under section 13BD of the Act.

#### 1. **Voter Authority Certificate (VAC)**

If a resident with an entry on the electoral register does not have any of the accepted forms of ID, listed below, they can apply for a free **Voter Authority Certificate** – this is a photographic identity document specifically for the purpose of voting.

There are three variations of this 'electoral identity document':

1. a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC)
2. a temporary Voter Authority Certificate, which the Tower Hamlets Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) will have the discretion to provide in contingency situations.
3. an Anonymous Electors Document (AED), for use by anonymous electors only  
Registered anonymous electors will be required to apply for an AED as this will be the ONLY accepted form of voter ID for anonymous electors at polling stations.

In Tower Hamlets we have 6 registered electors with anonymity who were invited to apply for the AED in January 2023

The Voter Authority Certificate is an A4 paper-based document, printed with appropriate security features, displaying,

- the elector's name,
- photograph,
- date of issue,
- issuing local authority,
- an 'identifier' (i.e., an alphanumerical reference), and
- recommended renewal date.

The deadline for applications for Voter Authority Certificates at an election will be 5pm, 6 working days ahead of a poll.

For those who apply for a Voter Authority Certificate the application service is as follows:

- a GOV.UK Voter Authority Certificate Service – this is an online application service, provided by central government on the GOV.UK website, where electors can apply online.
- an alternative paper application form, designed by the Electoral Commission, allows an application to be posted or handed into the ERO at the Town Hall.

The online application portal is hosted on a secure government portal and came into force on 16 January 2023.

**Important:**

If an elector possesses an accepted form of photographic ID, they do not need to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate (Voter ID).

If their photographic ID document has expired it can still be used, if the photograph is still a good likeness.

**2. Passport:**

- a United Kingdom passport
- a passport issued by an EEA state or Commonwealth country.
- If an elector does not have a passport, they can apply here  
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport>

**3. Driving licence (including provisional licences):**

- a licence to drive a motor vehicle granted under 15(i) Part 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, or (ii) the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (SI 1981/154 (N.I. 1))
- a driving licence issued by any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state.
- If an elector has lost their driving licence, they can apply here  
<https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/driving-licences>

**4. Immigration document:**

A biometric immigration document issued in accordance with regulations under section 5 of the UK Borders Act 2007.

**5. Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) hologram:**

An identity card bearing the proof of age standards scheme hologram. An application can be made here.

<https://www.pass-scheme.org.uk/card-suppliers/>

**6. Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card):**

Commonly known as a MOD90.

**7. Concessionary travel passes.**

This list sets out all concessionary travel cards that will be accepted, to avoid any confusion.

These include:

- An older persons travel pass (UK Government)
- <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-disabled-bus-pass>
- Oyster 60+ card
- Freedom Pass
- National Entitlement Card (Scottish Government)
- 60 and over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card (Welsh Government)
- Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card (Welsh Government)
- a Senior SmartPass (Northern Ireland)
- a Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass (Northern Ireland)
- a War Disablement SmartPass or War Disabled SmartPass (Northern Ireland)
- a 60+ SmartPass (Northern Ireland)
- a Half Fare SmartPass (Northern Ireland)

## **8. Chronically sick or disabled.**

A badge of a form prescribed under section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 or section 14 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 (blue badge scheme).

## **9. Electoral documents**

- an electoral identity document issued under section 13BD (electoral identity document: Great Britain)
- an anonymous elector's document issued under section 513BE (anonymous elector's document: Great Britain) the holder of which has an anonymous entry at the time of the application for a ballot paper.
- an electoral identity card issued under section 13C (electoral identity card: Northern Ireland)
- a national identity card issued by an EEA state.

## **Changes to absent voting**

It is expected that the changes to absent voting will come into force towards the end of 2023.

If an elector is applying to vote by post or by proxy, they will be asked to provide proof of their identity.

A new online application service will be set up.

This will enable the elector to apply for a postal or proxy vote online and verify their identity.

### **Postal Voting**

Currently if an elector votes by post they are required to refresh their signature every 5 years. This is, along with their Date of Birth, is known as a personal identifier.

This will be changed to having to completely renew the postal vote every 3 years.

If anyone hands postal votes into the polling stations on polling day, they will only be allowed to hand in a maximum of 6 postal votes.

Political parties and campaigners will also be prevented from handing in postal votes.

### **Proxy Voting**

People will only be able to act as a proxy for a maximum of 4 people.

Of these 4, the maximum number who can be 'domestic electors' (voters living in the UK) is 2.

## **Accessibility at polling stations**

The new law will make it easier for voters with disabilities to vote.

Changes will be in place from Thursday 4 May 2023.

Voters with disabilities will be given extra support at polling stations and anyone over the age of 18 will be able to act as a companion for a voter with a disability.

## **Rights of EU Citizens for voting and candidacy**

Not all EU citizens will automatically be entitled to register, vote, or stand for election.

The exceptions are:

- Qualifying EU citizens who come from countries which have reciprocal agreements with the UK (currently this is only Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, and Spain)
- EU citizens with retained rights, who were living in the UK before 1 January 2021 (before the UK left the EU)

This change will apply to all local elections and referendums and all elections for the council here in Tower Hamlets.

These changes are expected to take place by spring 2024.

## **Overseas Electors**

The 15-year limit on voting for British citizens living overseas is to end.

In future, any British citizen, who has been previously registered to vote in the UK or resident in the UK, will be able to apply to register to vote regardless of how long they have lived abroad.

The renewal period for overseas electors' registrations will change from an annual renewal to every 3 years.

It is expected that these changes will take place by May 2024, but the precise dates are yet to be confirmed by DLUHC.

## **Changes to voting systems.**

From May 2023 the voting system, at the elections listed below, will be changing from a supplementary vote system to a simple majority voting system.

This is traditionally known as 'first past the post' where the elector votes for one candidate only and the candidate with the most votes will win.

Candidates will no longer have to secure a certain number of votes; they will just have to win more votes than any other candidate.

The voting system will be changed in all elections in Tower Hamlets for:

- local authority Mayor (TH)
- the London Mayor (GLA)

## **Preventing undue influence**

There has been an expansion on the offence of undue influence, scheduled to come into force in November 2023, but a precise date is yet to be confirmed by DLUHC.

1. A person will be guilty of a corrupt practice if guilty of undue influence.
2. A person will be guilty of undue influence if that person carries out an activity listed below in paragraph 4 for the purpose of
  - inducing or compelling a person to vote in a particular way or to refrain from voting, or
  - otherwise impeding or preventing the free exercise of the franchise of an elector or of a proxy for an elector.
3. A person is also guilty of undue influence if that person carries out an activity falling within any of the activities listed below, (a) to (f) on account of

- a person having voted in a particular way or refrained from voting, or
- assuming a person to have voted in a particular way or to have refrained from voting.

4. The activities are as follows.

- a. using or threatening to use violence against a person.
- b. damaging or destroying, or threatening to damage or destroy, a person's property.
- c. damaging or threatening to damage a person's reputation.
- d. causing or threatening to cause financial loss to a person.
- e. causing spiritual injury to, or placing undue spiritual pressure on, a person.
- f. doing any other act designed to intimidate a person.
- g. doing any act designed to deceive a person in relation to the administration of an election.

For the purposes of (2) and (3) above an activity is carried out if it is

- a) by that person
- b) by that person jointly with one or more other persons, or
- c) by one or more other persons on behalf of that person, with that person's authority or consent.

In 4.f. & 4.g. above, "act" includes an omission (and references to the doing of an act are to be read accordingly).

## **DLUHC - New Burdens Funding**

### **1. What is the policy?**

- 1.1 A New Burden is defined as a policy or initiative which increases the cost of providing local authority services. In 2010, the Cabinet agreed that all New Burdens on local authorities must be properly assessed and fully funded by the relevant department.
- 1.2 The introduction of the Electoral Integrity Programme will place a burden on all local authorities in various ways, including, for example, the time administrative staff will need to process applications for Voter Authority Certificates, additional equipment that may be required for some offices or polling stations, or additional poll clerks that may need to be hired for polling day.
- 1.3 DLUHC are therefore responsible for providing local authorities with funding for this additional burden.

### **2. Who does this policy affect?**

- 2.1 This applies to all local authorities in the UK including Tower Hamlets.

### **3. How will funding be provided?**

- 3.1 Funding will be provided through a hybrid approach comprising of upfront grant payments and Justification Led Bids.
- 3.2 Grants will enable a proportion of the allocation to be distributed early in the year, via a single grant payment.
- 3.3 Justification Led Bids will release funds to local authorities later in the year, retrospectively based on evidence of spend.

### **4. When will local authorities receive their funding?**

- 4.1 Tower Hamlets received an initial grant in November 2022.
- 4.2 A further grant payment was then received in April 2023, and another will be made in April 2024.
- 4.3 The JLB window to retrospectively claim additional funding is in the Summer/Autumn of 2023 and then repeated in 2024.
- 4.4 To date Tower Hamlets has received the following grants from Government (DLUHC).
  - 2022/2023 - £10,300
  - 2023/2024 - £6,306

### **5. What will the funding cover?**

- 5.1 Below is the breakdown of cost lines for the accessibility policy changes and the introduction of voter identification.
- 5.2 The funding for other changes being introduced after May 2023 is still being finalised and will be communicated in due course. Funding for by-elections will be provided by JLB (in summer/autumn 2023 and 2024).

## **6. Accessibility:**

6.1 Equipment – via the grant received in Nov 2022 and JLB in Summer/Autumn 2023:

- Funding will be provided to purchase a range of equipment to support disabled people to vote.
- The purchase of equipment is at the discretion of Returning Officers, who must have regard to EC guidance, and may include:
  - general accessible equipment.
  - assistive writing devices such as pencil grips; and
  - additional seating for those less able to stand.

6.2 Staff time – via JLB in Summer/Autumn 2023:

- 10 minutes of additional set up time for accessibility related equipment.
- Training for electoral administrators – via grant in April 2023 and April 2024:
  - one additional day of training to cover both accessibility and voter identification policies.
  - Training for polling station staff – via grant in April 2023 and April 2024: 10 minutes additional training.

## **7. Voter identification:**

7.1 Electoral Staff admin time (processing time) – via grant in Nov 2022, April 2023, April 2024 and JLB in Summer/Autumn 2023 and 2024:

7.2 Funding will cover the additional time it takes to process Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) applications.

- On average, this has been assumed to take 6 minutes for an online application and 8 minutes for a paper application.
- Following the introduction of the VAC in 2023 prior to the local elections in May 2023 the online assumption is broadly correct when the application is complete but where there are enquiries to complete the application this can take a considerable time to complete, and no assumption has been made for these scenarios.
- When an application for the VAC is received through the post the assumption is also about right, but the same principles apply in that enquiries significantly increase the time taken to process.
- Applications received in person at the Town Hall can take more than 30 minutes if complete, but this is to be tested given the time for staff to attend reception and the numbers of applications that may be received prior to polls held in Tower Hamlets. If incomplete this will again only add to the time needed e.g., photographs taken, and entries made onto the portal by staff.

7.3 Staff – via grant in April 2023 and 2024 (poll clerks) and JLB in Summer/Autumn 2023 and 2024 (contact centre staff)

- One additional poll clerk per polling station for year 1 (2023/24) and 2 (2024/25) and in every UKPGE year of the policy; and
- One temporary contact centre staff member for the first two years of implementation for two months before elections.

- 7.3 Equipment - via JLB in Summer/Autumn 2023:
- The purchase of one camera and one printer-scanner per local authority (if required); and
  - one privacy screen and mirror per polling station (if required).
- 7.4 Poll card costs – via grant in April 2023 and 2024
- Difference between current poll card and new poll card (A4 and enveloped) will be funded.
- 7.5 Storage – via JLB in Summer/Autumn 2023 and 2024:
- Additional storage space to store additional equipment.
  - The required spaced is assumed to be 75 square feet and it is estimated around 2/3 of LAs will need it.
- 7.6 Training for administrators – via grant in Nov 2022, April 2023 and April 2024:
- one additional day of training to cover both accessibility and voter identification policies.
  - Training for polling station staff– via grant in April 2023/24:
    - 30 minutes additional training.


## **8. Who has been consulted during development of the funding model?**

- 8.1 Significant engagement with local authorities has taken place over several years to build a reliable evidence base and to ensure the funding models are as accurate as possible.
- 8.2 Assumptions, approaches, and individual cost lines have been tested with an Expert Panel, which is made up of a range of sector organisations and local authorities from across Great Britain, who have provided critical feedback on the funding model. We have also received feedback and evidence through numerous cost surveys since 2019.

## **9. What are the next steps?**

- 9.1 Letters were sent to all local authorities in September to provide a written commitment that DLUHC will be providing funding for implementation of the Elections Act under the New Burdens doctrine. This provided Financial Directors the assurance they needed to begin to commit funding, for example for the hiring and training of staff.
- 9.2 Formal Grant Determination Letters (GDLs) were sent to all local authorities at the end of November 2022 and in April 2023, setting out the funding allocations for each local authority for the implementation of the voter identification and accessibility policies, and providing guidance on costs. Initial New Burdens funding was released to local authorities alongside their GDL at the end of November 2022.
- 9.3 The second grant payment was made via BACS on 14 April 2023 via Section 31 grants.
- 9.4 Information and guidance on the JLB process was circulated to local authorities in February 2023

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>General Purposes Committee</b></p> <p>Tuesday, 13 June 2023</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Appointment of Member to the Corporate Parenting Board</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

## Special Circumstances Justifying Urgent Consideration

This report was not ready at the time of agenda despatch because at that time this solution to correct the error made at the Annual Meeting of Council had not been determined. The report needs to be considered because it is a simple request and the Corporate Parenting Board is an important body and so making an appointment quickly is in the Council's interest. However, the Committee could decide to refer the appointment to the July meeting of Council if it does not feel in a position to make such an appointment.

## Executive Summary

The Annual Meeting of Council appoints Members to the Council's Committees as well as making appointments to some Boards and Outside Bodies this included appointing Members to the Corporate Parenting Board.

However, due to an administrative error, three instead of four Members were appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board and so one vacancy remains to be filled.

The General Purposes Committee has delegated authority to agree appointments to Committees and Boards and so this report asks the Committee to make an appointment to fill the vacancy.

## Recommendations:

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree an appointment to fill the vacancy on the Corporate Parenting Board.

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 A vacancy exists on the Corporate Parenting Board and as an important function of the council it is important to fill it as soon as possible.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee can nominate any Member to sit on the Board or it could decide not to make the appointment.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Annual Meeting of Council appoints Members to the Council's Committees as well as making appointments to some Boards and Outside Bodies this included appointing Members to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 3.2 However, due to an administrative error, three instead of four Members were appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board and so one vacancy remains to be filled. The Terms of Reference allow for the appointment of three Members 'plus' the Cabinet Member for Children. Unfortunately, it was missed that one of three appointments agreed by Council was the Cabinet Member for Children and so Council should have made one further appointment.
- 3.3 The General Purposes Committee has delegated authority to agree appointments to Committees and Boards and so this report asks the Committee to make an appointment to fill the vacancy.
- 3.4 There were two nominations which were presented to the Annual Meeting of Council but which were not considered at that meeting. These are Councillors Mufeedah Bustin and Sirajul Islam.
- 3.5 General Purposes Committee could agree to appoint either of these nominees but it is also free to consider any other nominations made at the Committee meeting. The Board is not subject to rules of political proportionality.
- 3.6 The three nominations so far agreed are:
- Councillor Maium Talukdar (also Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children)
  - Councillor Bodrul Choudhury
  - Councillor Musthak Ahmed
- 3.7 Any nomination agreed will join the Board for the remainder of the 2023-24 municipal year.

## **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None specific to this report.

## **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
  - Consultations,
  - Environmental (including air quality),
  - Risk Management,
  - Crime Reduction,
  - Safeguarding.
  - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 None specific to this report.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications relating to this report.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The membership of the Corporate Parenting Board is set out in Part D of the Council's Constitution and is stated to include Lead Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People (Chair) and three additional co-opted Members, as well as others who are not Members of the Council.
- 7.2 Whilst the Annual Meeting of Council agrees appointments to committees and panels of the Council, the General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference (Rule 5) allow the Committee to make appointments to Council committees and subordinate bodies.
- 7.3 Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the discharge of a local authority's functions by a committee of the authority.
- 7.4 The matters set out in this report comply with the above legislation and with the Council's Constitution.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None

### **Appendices**

- None

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

**List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None

**Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A