



# General Purposes Committee

## Agenda

**Tuesday, 12 December 2023 at 6.30 p.m.**  
**Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall,**  
**160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ**

### **Members:**

**Chair:** Councillor Shafi Ahmed

**Vice Chair:** Councillor Abu Chowdhury

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Councillor Asma Begum, Councillor James King, Councillor Rebaka Sultana and Councillor Maium Talukdar

**Substitutes:** Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury, Councillor Marc Francis, Councillor Sirajul Islam, Councillor Abdul Wahid and Councillor Abdul Malik

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

### **Contact for further enquiries:**

Joel West, Democratic Services,  
joel.west@towerhamlets.gov.uk  
020 7364 4207

Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ  
<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>



## Public Information

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**Please note:** Whilst the meeting is open to the public, the public seating in the meeting room for observers may be limited due to health and safety measures. You are advised to contact the Democratic Services Officer to reserve a place.

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## **A Guide to General Purposes Committee**

This Committee is responsible for a range of non executive functions, including electoral matters, personnel issues and appeals. It also has responsibility for considering and making recommendations to Full Council on the introduction, amendment or revocation of new byelaws and can consider and make non-material changes to the Council's Constitution.

The Committee is made up of nine Members of the Council as appointed by Full Council. Political balance rules apply to the Committee. Each political group may also appoint up to three substitutes. The quorum is three Members of the Committee.

The full terms of reference for the committee is set out in the - Council Constitution

### **Public Engagement**

Meetings of the Committee are open to the public to attend, and a timetable for meeting dates and deadlines can be found on the council's website.

# London Borough of Tower Hamlets

## General Purposes Committee

Tuesday, 12 December 2023

6.30 p.m.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

#### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (PAGES 7 - 8)

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, please see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are reminded to declare the nature of the interest and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately it's the Members' responsibility to declare any interests and to update their register of interest form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of your interest, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services

#### 2. MINUTES (PAGES 9 - 12)

To agree the unrestricted minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 28 September 2023.

#### 3. WORK PLAN (PAGES 13 - 18)

To review the Committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

#### 4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

##### 4.1 LA Governor Appointment Report December 2023 (To Follow)

##### 4.2 Guidance for Members and Officers on Outside Organisations (To Follow)

##### 4.3 Review of polling places (To Follow)

#### 5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT



## 6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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

### EXEMPT SECTION (Pink Papers)

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

### Next Meeting of the General Purposes Committee

Tuesday, 27 February 2024 at 6.30 p.m. to be held in Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ



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# Agenda Item 1

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER**

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

### **(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)**

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

**DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests.** In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

### **(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)**

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

### **(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.**

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

### **Guidance on Predetermination and Bias**

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

### **Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting**

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

**Further Advice** contact: Janet Fasan, Monitoring Officer, Tel: 0207 364 4800.

## APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

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

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



**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWER HAMLETS TOWN HALL, 160 WHITECHAPEL  
ROAD, LONDON E1 1BJ**

**Members Present in Person:**

Councillor Shafi Ahmed (Chair)  
Councillor Saied Ahmed  
Councillor Kabir Ahmed  
Councillor Sabina Akhtar  
Councillor James King  
Councillor Rebaka Sultana

**Members In Attendance Virtually:**

Councillor Asma Begum

**Apologies:**

Councillor Maium Talukdar (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education,  
Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy  
Mayor))

**Officers Present in Person:**

Janet Fasan (Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)  
Matthew Mannion (Head of Democratic Services)  
Joel West (Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

**Officers In Attendance Virtually:**

Farhad Ahmed (Head of Governor Services)  
Robert Curtis (Head of Electoral Services)

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None were declared.

**2. MINUTES**

The unrestricted minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

Further to Item 6.1, the Committee were informed that Councillor Nathalie Bienfait had accepted the position on the Corporate Parenting Board for 2023-24.

### **3. WORK PLAN**

The work plan, as set out in the agenda pack was noted.

### **4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **4.1 Local Authority Governor Applications September 2023**

Farhad Ahmed, Head of School Governance and Information, introduced the report that set out for Members details of applicants who had applied to be nominated as local authority governors at Tower Hamlets maintained schools.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee:

1. Agree to nominate the applicants to the positions that are available for local authority governors at maintained schools in Tower Hamlets as set out in the report.

#### **4.2 Elections Act 2022 - Electorate Engagement Update**

Robert Curtis, Head of Electoral Services, introduced the report that updated the Committee on the planning that is in place, the co-operation between departments within the Council, the national engagement planning undertaken by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators regarding the implementation of the Elections Act 2022.

Further to questions from Committee members, Robert provided more information on:

- Communication campaigns including social media and email updates to stakeholders
- How the Council was ensuring best practice by learning from and visiting to local authorities
- How the Council was communicating with hard to reach residents.
- Changes to poll cards to highlight changes to voting (such as requirement for ID) and accompanying leaflets from the electoral commission.
- Plans to provide translations of advice and guidance into other languages, including Bengali.
- Arrangements for voters who may not have valid ID. A special certificate is available which can be requested any time until 12 days before the election. There will also be an urgent process for lost etc certificates.
- Planning for and contingency arrangements around general elections. Uncertainty of timings and dates made planning difficult, but plans and

additional resources were in place if needed at short notice.

- Saied – grants from DLAC? Forecast expenditure and whether any under or overspend and where spent?
- Funding and allocation of grants for election expenses and additional duties. Whilst costs are unknown, the Council will re-approach the government department for additional bids should there be a shortfall in the available grant.

Members offered their thanks to Robert and his team for their hard work.

**RESOLVED** that the General Purpose Committee:

1. Notes the engagement planning for the Elections Act 2022 and the continual updating and reviews of implementation approaching the Greater London Authority polls in May 2024, the General Election to be held no later than 28 January 2025 and the changes to electoral registration.

#### **4.3 Constitution Updates**

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report that provided an update on amendments to the constitution required or made under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Committee.

Matthew provided a brief update of the first meeting of the constitution working group. The Committee discussed the role and work plan of the working group, including asking that the work plan include a review of timings and deadlines for motions for Council, including whether a deadline should be included for notifying opposition groups. Mathew advised that the working group could explore, but would have limited powers to influence executive procedures, such as public and back-bench engagement opportunities at Cabinet meeting.

#### **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

None.

#### **6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

A resolution to exclude press and public was not required.

#### **7. EXEMPT MINUTES**

There were no exempt minutes to consider.

The meeting ended at 7.05 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Shafi Ahmed  
General Purposes Committee

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# **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN and ACTION LIST 2023/24**

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Agenda Item 3

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**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24**

## ACTIONS LIST

<b>Action number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Originating Meeting/Item</b>	<b>Due Date / Comment</b>
1.	Interim and Acting Up Arrangements	Musrat Zaman, Dir Workforce, OD and Business Support	February 2023	Added to Human Resources Committee work plan following changes to GPC terms of reference.
2.	Headteacher Forum	Farhad Ahmed, Head of Governor Services	February 2023	To be carried into 23-24 work plan. To report on engagement with the Headteacher forum
3.	Constitution Working Group	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer / Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	February 2023	To report as necessary on the work of the Constitution Working Group
4.	Communicating electoral changes to residents	Robert Curtis, Head of Electoral Services	June 2023	Report presented to September 2023 meeting.

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**N.B. once concluded** - actions should remain on the list marked 'complete' for the remainder of the municipal year.

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24**

<b>13 JUNE 2023</b>			
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS</b>
1. Annual administrative reports	To receive the ordinary annual reports such as to note terms of reference, membership, quorum and meeting dates.	Matthew Mannion Head of Democratic Services	
2. Local Authority Governor Applications	To endorse nominations for appointments to Local Authority Schools	Farhad Ahmed Head of Governance Information and Traded Services	
3. Constitution Update	To receive any updates to the Constitution	Matthew Mannion Head of Democratic Services	
4. Update on the Elections Act 2022	To receive an update on the Elections Act 2022	Robert Curtis Head of Electoral Services	
5. Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer	Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer	Robert Curtis Head of Electoral Services	

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24**

<b>28 SEPTEMBER 2023</b>			
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS</b>
1. Local Authority Governor Applications	To endorse nominations for appointments to Local Authority Schools	Farhad Ahmed, Head of School Governance, Information and Traded Services	
2. Constitution Update	To receive any updates to the Constitution	Matthew Mannion Head of Democratic Services	
3. Elections Act 2022 (Electorate Engagement)	To set out communications and engagement to inform residents of changes as a result of new electoral legislation.	Robert Curtis Head of Electoral Services	



**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24**

<b>12 DECEMBER 2023</b>			
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS</b>
1. Local Authority Governor Applications	To endorse nominations for appointments to Local Authority Schools	Farhad Ahmed, Head of School Governance, Information and Traded Services	
2. Constitution Update	To receive any updates to the Constitution	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	
3. Review of polling places	To note and inform the annual review of polling places in the borough.	Robert Curtis Head of Electoral Services	Full Council, 24th Jan 24
4. Guidance to Members serving on outside bodies	To present the guidance, following comment from the Standards Advisory Committee	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	SAC September 2023

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24**

<b>27 FEBRUARY 2024</b>			
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS</b>
1. Local Authority Governor Applications	To endorse nominations for appointments to Local Authority Schools	Farhad Ahmed, Head of Governance Information and Traded Services	
2. Constitution Update	To receive any updates to the Constitution	Matthew Mannion Head of Democratic Services	