

Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Monday, 17 June 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

VENUE

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

Members:	Deputies (if any):
Chair: Councillor Shiria Khatun	
Vice-Chair:	
Councillor Aminur Khan	Councillor Peter Golds, (Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Shiria Khatun, John Pierce, David Edgar and Ahmed Adam Omer)
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor David Snowdon, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Peter Golds)
Councillor John Pierce	Councillor Bill Turner, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Shiria Khatun, Rajib Ahmed, Marc Francis and John Pierce)
Councillor Alibor Choudhury	Councillor M. A. Mukit MBE, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Shiria Khatun, Rajib Ahmed, Marc Francis and John Pierce)
Councillor Craig Aston	

[Note: The quorum for this body is 3 Members].

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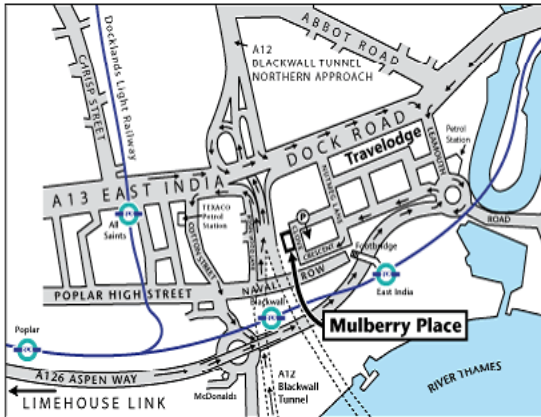
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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Monday, 17 June 2013

7.00 p.m.

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

At the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 22nd May 2013, Councillor Shiria Khatun was appointed Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the Municipal Year 2013/2014.

However, it is necessary to elect a Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the Municipal Year 2013/2014.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

PAGE NUMBERS	WARD(S) AFFECTED
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1 - 4

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

See attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

5 - 20

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 27 March 2013 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 10th April 2013.

5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 General Purpose Committee Terms Of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meeting (GPC001/124)

21 - 28

5.2 Review of Virement Rules - update

Report of the Corporate Director, Resources to follow

5.3 Ward Boundary Changes Update and Polling District Polling Place review **29 - 36**

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.

7. RESTRICTED MINUTES **37 - 42**

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the restricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 27 March 2013.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS **43 - 84**

Agenda Item 3

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

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

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

Interests and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

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

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

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

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

Effect of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on participation at meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

Further advice

For further advice please contact:-

Isabella Freeman, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services), 020 7364 4801; or
John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services, 020 7364 4204

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

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

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

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 27 MARCH 2013

**MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Shiria Khatun (Chair)

Councillor David Edgar
Councillor Peter Golds

Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Craig Aston

Officers Present:

Jill Bell	– (Head of Legal Services (Environment), Legal Services, Chief Executive's)
David Courcoux	– (Political Adviser to the Labour Group, Chief Executive's)
Hania Franek	– (Head of School Governance & Information, Education Social Care & Wellbeing)
Paul Greeno	– (Senior Advocate, Legal Services, Chief Executive's)
Chris Holme	– (Acting Corporate Director - Resources)
Louise Stamp	– (Electoral Services Manager, Chief Executive's)
Angus Taylor	– (Principal Committee Officer, Democratic Services, Chief Executive's)

COUNCILLOR SHIRIA KHATUN (CHAIR) IN THE CHAIR

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor John Pierce (Vice- Chair) for whom Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed was deputising.
- Councillor Lutfu Begum.
- Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer.

Noted

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other declarations of interest were made.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

Resolved

That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee, held on 19th December 2012, be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings, and the Chair be authorised to sign them accordingly.

Action by:

Angus Taylor (Principal Committee Officer, Democratic Services, CE's)

4. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Olympic Park Byelaws

Mr Greeno, Senior Advocate – Legal Services, introduced and highlighted key points in the report, which provided details of proposals for byelaws to cover the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park ('the Park') following handover of the Park in 2013 to the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC). The Park straddled several local authorities, including Tower Hamlets, with each asked to make identical byelaws, for parks/ open spaces and public conveniences, thereby addressing potential problem behaviours and ensuring acceptable behaviour in the Park.

A discussion followed which focused on clarification being sought and given on the following points:-

- What stage had the other relevant boroughs reached in the making of these byelaws. Some other boroughs had applied to DCLG for pre-approval of their byelaws well ahead of the July 2013 deadline.
- Whether there were significant differences between the byelaws to apply in the LBTH part of the Park and those to apply in other parts. There would be a difference in the age threshold to use play areas with this having been raised to 14 years old in LBTH but being 11 in the Park.
- Whether a person would be able to undertake an activity such as archery in a part of the park in one borough but not in another part. No the byelaws in one area complemented those of another.

- Whether these byelaws would also apply to smaller parks and open spaces in Tower Hamlets. No a separate byelaw making process had commenced before this one and these were due to come into force in other LBTH parks later in the year.
- Also whether they would apply to open spaces on Housing Association land. No; and byelaws for HA land fell under the provisions of different statutory powers.
- In the event of a breach of the byelaws, what enforcement action could be taken, who was empowered to take this, who was responsible for the cost of this. Whether consideration had been given to byelaws to mitigate abuse of the Park by 'problem Travellers' as had happened in the recent past with the "Occupy" campaign in Mile End Park. The LLDC security Officers could not enforce only ask people to desist and the process to escalate enforcement to Safer Neighbourhood teams or the Police was outlined, and who bore responsibility for the cost of this. Trespassing Travellers could be dealt with by court order.
- Whether there had been any breaches of park byelaws in recent years. There had not been a prosecution for breach of park byelaws in LBTH in at least 20 years.

The Chair **Moved** the recommendation as set out in the report, and it was: -

Resolved:

That Full Council be recommended to make two sets of byelaws for Queen Elizabeth II Olympic Park, as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

Action by:

Angus Taylor (Principal Committee Officer, Democratic Services, CE's)
Paul Greeno (Senior Advocate, Legal Services, CE's)

4.2 Review of Virement Rules

Special Circumstances and Reasons for Urgency

The Chair informed members of the GPC that the special circumstances and reasons for urgency associated with the proposals were as below.

"The report on Review of Virement Rules follows the Budget Council decision of 7th March 2013 and required research into what actions had been taken as a result of a previous Council decision. In order to take forward the proposed amendment at Budget Council which could not be considered at that meeting this is the earliest opportunity for the matter to be considered."

The **Chair** subsequently **agreed** the special circumstances and reasons for urgency, indicating that she was satisfied that the matter was urgent, as defined in the Authority's Constitution (Part 4 Rules of Procedure, Section 4.2 Access to Information Procedure Rules, Rule 6 Items of Business, sub paragraphs 6.3 and 6.5. The special circumstances justifying urgency being as detailed above.

Mr Holme, Acting Corporate Director Resources, introduced and highlighted key points in the report, which:

- Provided background information regarding the need for establishment of a working group to undertake a review budget making/ virement arrangements and make recommendations to Council. Terms of Reference and timeline for the proposed review were also reported.
- Outlined the definition and nature of virements and statutory guidance about them.
- Detailed the existing virement rules set out in the Authority's constitution.

Mr Holme emphasised that he had progressed the initiation of the review and with GPC approval would progress the engagement of CIPFA to help identify a suitably qualified and experienced independent advisor to the working group.

A discussion followed which focused on the following points:-

- Commented that it was disappointing that a resolution of full Council taken in January 2012, instructing the then Interim Chief Executive to set up a working group on budget making and virement arrangements, was only being progressed in March 2013. Officers clarified that agreement had not been reached on setting up the working group, and in particular identifying the independent adviser to it. The action had been for another Officer to take, but was now being taken forward by the Acting Corporate Director Resources.
- Clarification was sought and given as to:
 - Whether Officers were more optimistic that stakeholder agreement on the Independent Adviser (IA) would now be reached.
 - What comprised the review cost of £15,000, and particularly the element for providing an IA.
- Whether the costs associated with recruiting and remunerating an independent adviser were a good use of public funds. Consensus that the review process needed taken forward and the engagement of CIPFA in the IA recruitment was an important ingredient in achieving agreement on the IA and achieving progress.
- Consideration that the Mayor's recent agreement of virements of approximately £700k, to fund activities not provided for in the Budget set by full Council, merited action to prevent similar future decisions. Accordingly the Chair informed members of the Cabinet that she had **Tabled** a written **Motion** in relation to the recommendations set out in the report, a copy of which would be interleaved with the minutes. The Chair then formally **Moved** the written motion as tabled, together with the following additional proposal, for the consideration of members of the GPC:-
"That the Local Government Association (LGA) and London Councils conduct a review [of virement arrangements] as part of their governance investigation."

- Councillor Edgar, in **Seconding** the tabled written motion as amended orally by the Chair [the 'motion on the table'], commented and sought Officer responses as follows:
 - It was important to have a dialogue regarding the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) being the mechanism to police the virement cap.
 - The timescale for constitutional changes to affect a virement cap was constrained given the complexity of the issues and work required. However there was an imperative to act quickly as a decision had been made which was not in line with the Authority's Budget. The full Council had wanted to set a £200k limit on virements not requiring its approval, and there was a need to act quickly to resolve the issue and ensure clarity.
 - The LGA and London Councils were already undertaking a review of governance in LBTH and the Budget making and virement arrangements should be included in this.
- Ms Bell, Head of Legal Services Environment and Mr Holme, Acting Corporate Director Resources, responded:
 - Officers were not aware that the LGA and London Councils had commenced a review in LBTH.
 - The timetable proposed in the tabled motion was extremely tight, and may not be achievable, if work on the proposals it contained had not already started. Changes to virement rules would require advice to be sought, which may not be available in the timescale. Complex matters needed time for examination eg ratio of virement limit. to overall Council budget and the level of spend in the Authority's control (as this may be less if outsourced and under contract).
 - The constitutional changes being proposed for recommendation to full Council were significant and robust reasons for making the changes would be required, and these had not yet been given.
 - The OSC was not a decision making body, and if the approvals of virements above a cap were to be referred to a committee for determination it should probably be the GPC. The statutory and constitutional position required examination.
 - Any decision to introduce a virement limit of £200k had significant implications for the Section 151 Officer and his Section 114 responsibilities and this needed examination.
 - Several scenarios were cited which might require urgent remedial action and an urgent funding decision, and it was uncertain how these would be dealt with without emergency action or virement powers. Therefore the operational detail needed examination, as service delivery may be severely impacted and the authority put at risk. There was a duty on the authority to properly administer its financial affairs and the proposed virement cap might limit its ability to meet this obligation.

- Officers had understood proposed changes to virement rules were to be temporary, not permanent as the in the tabled motion.
- Clarification was sought and given as to whether Officers were suggesting that whilst the working group to review budget making/ virement arrangements was established and reported, that there be a temporary £200k virement cap in the meantime. Ms Bell clarified that the full Council meeting on 17th April could be recommended to set a temporary virement cap pending the outcome of this review.
- Consideration that extreme circumstances had been given as a rationale not to introduce the virement cap, and the Authority should make decisions based on the current position not a hypothetical one.

Adjournment

At this juncture the Chair informed members of the GPC that she considered it appropriate that there be a short adjournment to allow Members time to assimilate and discuss the comments/ advice of Officers in relation to the motion she had proposed, and determine if it should be amended further. Accordingly the Chair **Moved** the following procedural motion for the consideration of members of the GPC, and it was: -

Resolved

That the GPC adjourn for a period of 10 minutes, at 7.50pm, and that the meeting reconvene at 8.00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7.50pm
The meeting reconvened at 8.00pm

A discussion followed which focused on the following points:-

- Noted the Officer comments regarding the function of OSC being primarily scrutiny and that another committee maybe more appropriate for the referral of virements for approval. However the second clause of the 'motion on the table' was only tentative, stating that GPC was "minded" to recommend this constitutional change to full Council, so there could be a dialogue on which committee was appropriate, and if Officers concluded otherwise an appropriate change to committee terms of reference could recommended by the extraordinary GPC prior to full Council on 17th April.
- Noted Officer comments regarding the decision making sequence, the complexity of the issues involved and the significance of the implications arising from the proposals. However, the full Council had taken a view on the authority's Budget, passed by a two thirds majority, which had since been circumvented. So virement powers were being used now and could make a significant difference to the Budget, and it was therefore considered important that action be taken quickly on the virement cap. An interim decision at the full Council meeting on 17th

April would allow action to be taken, whilst providing more time for Officers to consider the complex issues involved before a further decision at the full Council meeting on 26th June. Accordingly Councillor Edgar **proposed**, for the consideration of members of the GPC, that the 'motion on the table' be amended by deletion of the words "final decision" in the last paragraph of the tabled written motion and insertion at the end of that sentence the words " decision that remains in place until the full Council meeting on 26th June 2013."

- Consideration that if the LGA and London Councils were undertaking a governance review this should address all difficult and contentious issues for the Authority and its review should include budget making/ virement arrangements. However, Councillor Edgar **proposed**, for the consideration of members of the GPC, that the paragraph added orally by the Chair to the tabled written motion [which together comprised the the 'motion on the table'] should be amended to read:
"That the Local Government Association and London Councils be asked to consider the issue of virement rules as part of their current governance review at Tower Hamlets."
- Noted Officer advice that the current threshold of financial delegation to Officers was £250k, and any review of virement arrangements would be simpler and involve less work if the virement cap was to be set at £250k. Consideration however that the 'motion on the table' was only tentative, stating that GPC was "minded" to recommend full Council set an interim virement cap of £200k. Officers could review the implications of this and if they concluded a level of £250k was more appropriate this could be presented for consideration to the extraordinary GPC prior to full Council on 17th April.
- With reference to the budget making/ virement arrangements working group, it was emphasised that the GPC would consider its report and make a determination on its recommendations in due course. Noted that the 'motion on the table' took account of the timetable for the working group's review reporting to full Council on 26th June as any decision of full Council on 17th April would be interim.
- The Chair consulted members of the GPC on their availability for the extraordinary GPC prior to full Council on 17th April, as proposed in the 'motion on the table', and there was consensus that the meeting be convened on 10th April 2013 at 6.30pm. Accordingly the Chair **proposed**, for the consideration of members of the GPC, that the 'motion on the table' be amended to reflect this. The Chair also requested that Officers inform all members of GPC of the agreed date the next day.

The Chair summarised that what was being proposed on virement arrangements was tentative, as the motion stated GPC was "minded to recommend full Council" and any decision by full Council on 17th April was likely to be interim. She then formally **Moved the Substantive Motion** (comprising of the tabled written motion orally amended by the Chair and subsequently taking account of proposed amendments from Councillor Edgar and the Chair), and it was:-

Resolved:

1. The contents of the report be noted;
2. That the Committee is minded to recommend to full Council that it amend the Authority's Constitution to change the level at which virements need to be agreed by full Council from £1 million to £200,000;
3. That the Committee is minded to recommend that full Council delegates its power to approve virements to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discharge on full Council's behalf;
4. That any such constitutional change would include a point in the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee granting them the power to refer a decision of the approval of a virement to full Council should they deem it necessary;
5. That Officers be requested to identify and draft the necessary changes to the constitution in order to facilitate the above; that it be requested that a report detailing these changes, and Officers assessment of the impact they would have, be brought to an extraordinary GP Committee to be convened on 10th April 2013 at 6.30pm. This would be to allow the full Council meeting on the 17th of April 2013 to consider the issue and make a decision that remains in place until the full Council meeting on 26th June 2013; and
6. That the Local Government Association and London Councils be asked to consider the issue of virement rules as part of their current governance review at Tower Hamlets.

Action by:

Chris Holme (Acting Corporate Director Resources)

John Williams (Service Head Democratic Services, CE's)

Jill Bell (Head of Legal Services Environment, Legal Services, CE's)

4.3 Local Electoral Review - update

Ms Louise Stamp, Electoral Services Manager, introduced and summarised key points in the report, which provided a further progress update on the current Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) electoral review of Tower Hamlets, the aim of which was to establish the most suitable number of councillors for the authority; and within this to propose the number and boundaries of wards to improve electoral delivery. Ms Stamp added that once the LGBCE review was complete there would be a need to implement new polling districts/ polling stations and a further report would be submitted for GPC consideration in July 2013.

A discussion followed which focused on the following points:-

- Ms Stamp and her Officer team were formally thanked for provision of excellent support to the GPC and all political groups in understanding the LGBCE local electoral review process and to make representations through it.
- Commented that the contribution of Ward Members had been welcomed in previous reviews of polling districts/ polling places in Tower Hamlets, and accordingly proposed that Ward Members were consulted and engaged in the forthcoming review of such arrangements. A number of detailed suggestions were subsequently made as to how current such arrangements might be improved with these being re-visited in the forthcoming review. The retention of familiar polling stations to improve voter turnout and the importance of equal size polling districts was emphasised. Ms Stamp responded that the delivery of quality polling districts (not too large or small), consideration of where polling places were located, and the overall clarity of arrangements for voters, were all important factors for the polling district/ polling place review.
- Concern was expressed regarding the accuracy of the Electoral Register and assurance was sought and given regarding the cleansing of the Register before elections in 2014.

The Chair **Moved** (taking account of comments and suggestions from GPC members) together with an additional recommendation detailed at Resolution 3 below, and it was:-

Resolved

1. That the contents of the report and verbal update be noted;
2. That Ward Member consultation/ engagement in the forthcoming review of polling districts/ polling places in Tower Hamlets be accommodated; and other specific suggestions to improve current arrangements be accommodated as far as reasonably possible; and
3. That the report on the polling district/ polling place review in Tower Hamlets be presented to GPC for consideration on a date agreed by the Service Head Democratic Services after consultation with the Chair.

Action by:

John Williams (Service Head Democratic Services, CE's)
Louise Stamp (Electoral Services Manager, CE's)

4.4 Electoral Matters Update

Please note that the greater part of GPC deliberations relating to this item of business took place in Part Two of the proceedings (Exempt/ Confidential Section of the agenda or "closed session"), for the reasons outlined by the Chair below. However, for ease of reference, the deliberations/ decision taken

that pertain to the unrestricted report are set out below in the order detailed in the agenda.

The Chair informed members of the GPC that Appendix B to the report contained exempt/ confidential information, the consideration of which was required in Part Two of the proceedings (Exempt/ Confidential Section of the agenda: agenda Item 8). After an initial introduction of the unrestricted report and any discussion thereof in open session, it would therefore be necessary to exclude the public and press during consideration of the exempt/ confidential appendix.

The Chair also informed GPC members that:

- The report of the Electoral Commission: "Allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets in 2012 – Report on the outcome of investigations" shortly to be published by the Commission had been **Tabled**, a copy of which would be interleaved with the Unrestricted minutes.
- A proposed "Code of Conduct for campaigners: postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations" had been **Tabled**, a copy of which would be interleaved with the Unrestricted minutes.

Ms Louise Stamp, Electoral Services Manager, introduced the report which provided an update on various matters concerning electoral registration and the conduct of elections, and summarised the key points contained therein.

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted.

5. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair **Moved** and it was: -

Resolved:

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

SUMMARY OF EXEMPT PROCEEDINGS

7. EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Minutes of ordinary GPC, 19th December 2012, approved.

8. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

8.1 Electoral matters update - Appendix B

Appendix B to report tabled and contents noted.

The report of the Electoral Commission: "Allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets in 2012 – Report on the outcome of investigations" shortly to be published by the Commission tabled (See minute for Agenda Item 4.4) and contents noted.

A proposed "Code of Conduct for campaigners: postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations" tabled (See minute for Agenda Item 4.4) and contents noted.

8.2 Local Authority Governor Appointments

Contents of report noted and recommendations agreed with a minor amendment.

9. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items

The meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Shiria Khatun
General Purposes Committee

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 2013

**MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Shiria Khatun (Chair)

Councillor David Edgar (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Peter Golds

Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer

Councillor John Pierce

Officers Present:

Jill Bell – (Head of Legal Services (Environment), Legal Services, Chief Executive's)

Chris Holme – (Acting Corporate Director - Resources)

John Williams – (Service Head, Democratic Services, Chief Executive's)

Louise Fleming – (Senior Committee Officer, Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Review of Virement Rules- Follow-up Report

The Committee adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to read the report which had been tabled.

Upon reconvening, the Chair **agreed** the Special Reasons for Urgency, as set out in the report, as follows:

The report was not circulated with the Committee agenda nor available for inspection within the timescales set out in the Authority's Constitution because

of the short period available to compile the report following the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 27th March 2013. The report is nevertheless recommended for consideration at this meeting in order to ensure that there is no delay to the review of Virement Rules agreed by Members in accordance with the decision of the Council.

The Committee considered the report which had been requested at its previous meeting on 27th March 2013. At that meeting, the Committee agreed a number of proposals to recommend that full Council amend the Authority's Constitution and requested that officers draft proposed changes.

Mr Chris Holme, Acting Director of Resources, in introducing the report before the Committee, summarised the key points contained therein, outlining the recommendations and the proposed changes to the Constitution set out in Appendix C to the report and commenting as follows:-

- Following the decision of the full Council in January, the Head of Paid Service had set up a working group to undertake a review and consultation had taken place with other London Boroughs with no permanent Chief Executive on their arrangements. The Head of Paid Service would write to all Members when the results of that review were known.
- The timescale implications of commissioning a review of virements independently of the wider review were set out to the Committee.

Ms Jill Bell, Head of Legal Services (Environment) summarised the advice in the report relating to the Committee's original proposal that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be delegated powers to approve virements.

- The Local Government Act 2000, section 21 (4) states that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee may not discharge any functions of the authority other than the overview and scrutiny functions listed in that section. Therefore it would be inappropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be involved in taking Executive decisions other than in a scrutiny and advisory context as this would compromise the Committee's independence in regard to scrutiny matters. For example the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would not be in a position to consider a call in of its own decision in relation to a virement. Therefore it was proposed that the appropriate body to delegate such a power to was the General Purposes Committee.

A short discussion followed which focused on the following points:-

- The Committee accepted that the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to scrutinise decisions and that it was appropriate for decisions on virements to be delegated to a decision making committee.
- Clarification was sought on the approximate number of virements which were currently reported to the Cabinet. Officers advised that an audit of such decisions would need to take place to give an exact figure; and that some virements were contained in individual reports relating to a specific policy, in Capital Programme reports and some in the Record of Corporate Director Actions noting report. However, it

was thought to be approximately 50-60. This would not, however, represent 50-60 individual meetings as it would be possible to take a number of decisions together.

- Members were concerned that they did not want to become an obstacle to decision making and it was accepted that the General Purposes Committee would need to meet more often to make decisions.
- Members noted the advice of officers that reasons would need to be given for changing the limit as there were concerns about the impact on the business of the Council and the decision of the General Purposes Committee could be open to potential challenge by the Executive if reasons were not given.
- Members noted the advice of officers that a procedure be put in place to write to the Committee informing them of virement proposals and that a meeting would only be called in Members objected. Any objections would need to be received in writing by the Service Head, Democratic Services, and a record of objections lodged would be maintained. The details of the proposals would be incorporated into the report to Council on 17th April.

The Committee, having considered the contents of the report before it, the advice of officers and the recommended decisions set out therein adjourned for 5 minutes to consider an amended recommendation proposed by the Chair, and upon reconvening consequently unanimously **agreed** the following:

Resolved to adopt the following resolution in order to provide greater confidence in the Budget Procedure and the integrity of the Council's oversight of the budget including virements:

1. To recommend to Council that it amend the Constitution to change the level at which virements need to be agreed by Council from £1m to £250,000, the level at which virements are currently agreed by Cabinet.
2. To recommend that Council delegates its power to approve or disapprove virements to the General Purposes Committee to discharge on Council's behalf.
3. To recommend to Council that any virement below the £250,000 limit to a budget to which virements totalling £250,000 have previously been made for the same purpose, should also be agreed by the General Purposes Committee.
4. That the Constitutional change would include a point in the Terms of Reference for the General Purposes Committee granting them the power to refer a decision of the approval or disapproval of a virement to full Council should they deem it necessary.

5. To request officers identify and draft the necessary changes to the Constitution in order to facilitate the above and that this report be brought to the next Council meeting on 17th April 2013 for Council to consider and make a final decision.
6. That the Local Government Association (LGA) be asked to consider the issue of the level of Council approval for virements as part of their governance review.
7. To recommend that the new Constitutional arrangements would stand until such time as Council amends this section of the Constitution to change the limit.
8. That the independent review previously proposed by the Council be postponed, awaiting the outcome of the LGA governance review.
9. To recommend that the Head of Paid Service be delegated the necessary emergency powers as referred to by officers in their report for use in extraordinary situations
10. That a procedure be adopted for officers to write to the members of the General Purposes Committee regarding any proposed virement that is subject to the Committee's agreement and only call a meeting if receipted objections are received to the virement.

The meeting ended at 7.32 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Shiria Khatun
General Purposes Committee

Agenda Item 5.1

Committee	Date	Classification	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
General Purposes Committee	17 June 2013	Unrestricted	GPC001/124	5.1
Report of: Head of Democratic Services Originating Officer(s) : Evelyn Akoto, Democratic Services		Title : General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings Ward(s) affected: N/A		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of meetings of the General Purposes Committee for the Municipal Year 2013/14 for the information of members of the Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the General Purposes Committee note its Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of future meetings as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 At the Annual General Meeting of the full Council held on 22 May 2013, the Authority approved the review of proportionality, establishment of the Committees and Panels of the Council and appointment of Members thereto.
- 3.2 It is traditional that following the Annual General Meeting of the Council at the start of the Municipal Year, at which various committees are established, that those committees note their Terms of Reference, Quorum and Membership for the forthcoming Municipal Year. These are set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report respectively.
- 3.3 The Committee's meetings for the remainder of the year, as agreed at the meeting of the Council on 17th April 2013, are as set out in Appendix 3 to this report.
- 3.4 In accordance with the agreed calendar, meetings are scheduled to take place at 7.00pm.

4. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

- 4.1 Matters brought before the Committee under its terms of reference during the year will include comments on the financial implications of

decisions provided by the Chief Finance Officer. There are no specific comments arising from the recommendations in this report.

5. Concurrent report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

- 5.1 The information provided for the Committee to note is in line with the Council's Constitution and the resolutions made by Council on 13th May 2012.

6. One Tower Hamlets Considerations

- 6.1 When drawing up the schedule of dates, consideration was given to avoiding schools holiday dates and known dates of religious holidays and other important dates where at all possible.

7. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment

- 7.1 There are no specific SAGE implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

8. Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 The Council needs to have a programme of meetings in place to ensure effective and efficient decision making arrangements.

9. Crime and Disorder Reduction Implications

- 9.1 There are no Crime and Disorder Reduction implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972 SECTION 100D (AS AMENDED) LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Brief description of "background paper"

If not supplied
Name and telephone
number of holder

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – General Purposes Terms of Reference
Appendix 2 – Appointment to Committee
Appendix 3 – Dates of Meeting

APPENDIX 1

EXCERPT FROM THE LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS CONSTITUTION

3.3.6 General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference

<p>Membership: Seven Members of the Council. Up to three substitutes may be appointed for each Member</p>	
Functions	Delegation of Functions
<p>(i) Elections: To exercise powers in relation to the holding of elections and the maintenance of the electoral register including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of assistance at European Parliamentary elections; • power to make submissions to the Local Government Commission in relation to the boundaries of the borough or ward boundaries; • the appointment of a proper officer for the purposes of giving various notices in relation to elections and referenda (e.g. in relation to the verification number for petitions for a referendum under LGA 2000). <p>(ii) Appointments of officers or Members to external bodies.</p> <p>(iii) To recommend to Council the introduction, amendment or revocation of by-laws.</p> <p>(iv) Responsibility for the appointment and revocation of local authority school governors.</p> <p>(v) Any other functions which under the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, may not be the responsibility of the Executive and which are not delegated elsewhere under this Constitution.</p> <p>(vi) To make changes to the membership and substitute membership of committees appointed by the Council and their subordinate bodies, consistent with the proportionality rules.</p> <p>(vii) To consider amendments to the Council's Constitution and to make non material changes to the Constitution upon the recommendation of the Monitoring Officer.</p>	<p>The Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) is authorised to make or amend appointments in accordance with section 3.12.2</p>
<p>Quorum Three Members of the Committee</p>	

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APPENDIX 2

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (Seven members of the Council)			
Labour Group (4)	Conservative Group (1)	Respect Group (0)	Others (2)
Cllr Shiria Khatun (Chair) Cllr Rajib Ahmed Cllr Marc Francis Cllr John Pierce Deputies:- Cllr Khales Uddin Ahmed Cllr M A Mukit MBE Cllr Bill Turner	Cllr Craig Aston Deputies:- Cllr Peter Golds Cllr David Snowdon	n/a	Cllr Alibor Choudhury (Ind.) Cllr Aminur Khan (Ind.)

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APPENDIX 3

SCHEDULE OF DATES 2013/14

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Monday 17th June 2013
Wednesday 25th September 2013
Wednesday 18th December 2013
Wednesday 19th March 2014

It may be necessary to convene additional meetings of the Committee should urgent business arise. Officers will keep the position under review and consult with the Chair and other Members as appropriate.

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Agenda Item 5.3

Committee General Purposes Committee	Date 17th June 2013	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No. 5.3
Report of: Electoral Registration Officer/ Returning Officer Originating Officer(s): John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services		Title: Ward boundary changes and polling district/polling place review - update Ward(s) affected: All		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a further progress update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for changes to the ward boundaries and related arrangements in Tower Hamlets following the recent Local Electoral Review.
- 1.2 The report also proposes arrangements for the review of polling districts and polling places to be undertaken alongside the implementation of the new ward pattern.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee note the information in the report and agree the proposed process and timetable for the review of polling districts and polling places as set out at section 6 of this report.
- 2.2 That members be invited to submit any initial comments on proposed new polling districts and polling places to the Electoral Services Manager by 12th July 2013.

3. BACKGROUND – LOCAL ELECTORAL REVIEW

- 3.1 The Committee has previously been informed of the recommendations made by the LGBCE for changes to council size and ward arrangements in Tower Hamlets, arising from the recent Local Electoral Review. The review was undertaken because over time the representation of electors in our current wards had become unequal due to population changes, housing development etc. The aim of a Local Electoral Review is to establish the most suitable number of councillors for the authority; and within this to propose the number and boundaries of wards to:-

- Deliver electoral equality for voters.

- Reflect local community interests and identities; and
- Promote effective and convenient local government.

3.2 The Tower Hamlets review commenced on 29th November 2011 when representatives of the LGBCE addressed the Mayor and Councillors prior to the full Council meeting. Following the review process, which included a series of public consultations on various aspects of the electoral arrangements, the LGBCE issued its final recommendations on 25th March 2013

3.3 As reported to the Committee on 27th March, the Commission's final recommendations incorporated a small number of changes to the draft recommendations based on the evidence received during consultation. The Commission's final proposals can be summarised as follows:-

Council Size: The Commission confirmed the proposed reduction from 51 to 45 councillors

Ward Boundaries: The Commission confirmed its draft proposal for an increase in the number of wards from 17 to 20. There will be:

- 2 single-member wards;
- 11 two-member wards; and
- 7 three-member wards

The final recommendations included just three minor changes from the ward boundaries previously proposed by the Commission in November 2012:-

- The boundary between the proposed Millwall (now Island Gardens) and Blackwall & Cubitt Town wards will run along Pier Street instead of Seyssel Street;
- The western boundary of the proposed Limehouse ward will now run along the western edge of Keeper Wharf; and
- Victoria Park will remain split between Bow East and Bow West wards rather than all included in Bow East as previously proposed.

Ward Names: The Commission made a number of changes to its draft recommendations. In response to the consultation, the LGBCE changed the names of seven of the proposed wards as below, including the restoration of current names including Banglatown, St Dunstan's and Lansbury. The seven previously proposed names changed are:-

- Stepney East to St Dunstan's
- Stepney West to Stepney Green
- Poplar North to Lansbury
- Poplar South to Poplar
- Millwall to Island Gardens
- West India to Canary Wharf; and
- Spitalfields to Spitalfields & Banglatown

- 3.4 Full details of the electoral review report, consultation undertaken and proposals may be viewed on the Commission's website at www.lgbce.org.uk and detailed plans are available on the Commission's consultation portal at: <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>, where users are able to compare the recommendations with the existing wards.
- 3.5 Maps of each of the proposed new wards will be circulated to members at the meeting.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The LGBCE has confirmed that on 4th June 2013 the Tower Hamlets (Electoral Changes) Order 2013 was laid in draft in Parliament. The draft order, if made will give effect to the final recommendations of the electoral review as published on 25th March and described above.
- 4.2 The draft order may be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>. The draft order refers to a map which comprises the following sheet: [Sheet 1 - Overview \(PDF\)](#)
- 4.3 The draft order will be laid in Parliament for a period of 40 sitting days. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next scheduled elections for Tower Hamlets in 2014.
- 4.4 Subject to Government confirmation, the Mayoral and Council elections are likely to be combined with the European Parliamentary Elections on 22nd May 2014.
- 4.5 The revised Register of Electors 2014 will be amended to reflect the new wards and polling districts (see below) following the annual canvass in 2013/14. As part of a package of measures associated with the forthcoming introduction (after the 2014 elections) of Individual Electoral Registration, the Government has amended the timing of the canvass in 2013/14, which will run from the beginning of October to mid February. This means that the first register based on the revised electoral arrangements will be published on **17th February 2014**.

5. POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW

- 5.1 The LGBCE does not base its recommendations on, or take into account, the current location of polling places. The Commission recognises that an authority will normally wish to conduct a polling district review after any changes to the number or pattern of wards in the area.
- 5.2 The Council is required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act') to undertake a polling district and polling place review at least once every four years, and in accordance with this requirement reviews have taken place in 2007 and 2011, with a supplementary review in 2009.

- 5.3 At the 2011 review, the Committee agreed that polling districts should remain unchanged pending the Electoral Review to be conducted by the LGBCE. Now that the Commission's recommendations are known, a review of polling districts and polling places be carried out.

Definitions

- 5.4 Section 16 of the 2006 Act introduced a number of changes in respect of the way in which the review of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken. Polling districts, polling places and polling stations are defined as follows:-

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.

- 5.5 The Electoral Commission has issued guidance on the practical procedures involved in conducting a review of polling districts and polling places, including measures to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act. In determining polling places, an authority must:

(a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and

(b) seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons

- 5.6 Over the past two years Electoral Services have conducted a number of reviews. In 2008, all the premises used as polling stations were visited with a particular emphasis on access and the requirements of the DDA.

Process for the review

- 5.7 Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983 sets out the steps that authorities must follow in undertaking any review of polling districts and/or polling places. The authority must:-

- Publish notice of the holding of the review
- Consult the Returning Officer for every parliamentary election held in a constituency that is wholly or partly within its area. The Returning

Officer must make representations which must include information as to the location of polling stations (both existing and proposed) within polling places (both existing and proposed).

- Within thirty calendar days of their receipt, the relevant authority is required to publish the Returning Officer's representations
- Actively seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to: access to premises; or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability

5.8 In formulating his proposals, the Returning Officer will take into account matters including a guideline of approximately 1,500 electors per polling station; any anticipated growth in the electorate; known changes to the availability of current venues; alternatives to current venues where there is a better alternative; and views put forward previously and by ward councillors.

5.9 In addition, any elector in a constituency may make representations on the designation of polling places to the relevant authority. Although not specifically provided for in the review rules, the Council will wish to actively encourage representations from local constituency political parties and independent candidates in order to give key stakeholders in the electoral process the opportunity to participate. GP Committee on 27 March 2013 endorsed this approach and agreed 'that Ward Member consultation/engagement in the forthcoming review of polling districts/polling places in Tower Hamlets be accommodated; and other specific suggestions to improve current arrangements be accommodated as far as reasonably possible'

5.10 It is important to note that representations made by any person in connection with the review of polling places may include proposals for alternative polling places, which must then be considered by the relevant authority.

5.11 On completion of a review, the authority is required to give reasons for its decisions in respect of the designation of both polling districts and polling places. In addition, the authority must publish:

- all correspondence sent to a Returning Officer in connection with the review;
- all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review;
- the minutes of any meetings held by the authority where details of the review have been considered;
- details of the actual designations of polling districts and polling places agreed as a result of the review; and
- details of where the results of the review have been published.

5.12 Following the review, certain persons have a right to appeal to the Electoral Commission, namely:-

- An interested authority in England and Wales (namely a parish council or parish meeting in England, or a council of a community in Wales).
- not less than 30 electors in the constituency.
- a person (other than the Returning Officer) who has made representations under [Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983](#). Schedule A1 provides, among other things, that representations may be made by any elector in a constituency situated in whole or in part in the authority's area.
- a person who is not an elector in a constituency in the authority's area but who the Commission think has either sufficient interest in the accessibility of disabled persons to polling places in the area or has particular expertise in relation to the access to premises and facilities for disabled persons.

5.13 In addition, the Returning Officer may make observations on any representations made to the Electoral Commission. The Commission is required to consider any such representations and observations, and after doing so, may direct the authority to make any alterations it sees necessary to the polling places designated by the review.

5.14 Where an authority makes any alterations to the polling districts within its area, the Electoral Registration Officer must amend the register of electors accordingly. The Electoral Commission recommends that alterations to polling districts be timed to coincide with the annual revision of the register of electors in order to avoid confusion both for electoral professionals and other recipients of the register. As mentioned above, this will occur on 17th February 2014, after the annual canvass.

6. PROPOSED TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

6.1 The following process and timetable is proposed for the review:-

17 th June 2013:	Report to GP Committee
21 st June 2013:	Publish notice of review on Council website, in East End Life and Members' Bulletin and Town Hall noticeboard
12 th July 2013:	Deadline for initial comments from members to Returning Officer
9 th August 2013:	Returning Officer representations (proposals) to be published for consultation with the general public and specifically with ward councillors, local MPs and GLA member, political parties, election agents, the metropolitan police service, Education Services in relation to the use of schools, groups

representing people with disabilities and those with particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

13th September 2013: Close of consultation

25th September 2013: Report to General Purposes Committee including response to consultation and proposals

6.2 Before starting the formal review the Returning Officer will seek the initial views of Members on any particular issues and also review any reports from the presiding officers at recent elections. A schedule of polling stations used at the 2012 GLA elections will be circulated to members at the meeting.

7. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

8. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

8.1 The reduction in the number of Councillors from 51 to 45 will result in a saving of approximately £60k per annum in the Members' Allowances budget with effect from 2014/15.

8.2 The report describes a review of polling districts and polling places in Tower Hamlets to be undertaken ahead of the 2014 elections. Any financial implications arising from changes to the polling districts or polling places are expected to be fully contained within existing budgets.

9. IMPLICATIONS FOR ONE TOWER HAMLETS

9.1 The aim of the electoral review is to secure appropriate and as far as possible equal representation for electors across all wards of the borough.

9.2 Disability issues will be taken fully into account in election matters particularly in the polling station review. All recommended polling places will as far as practicable be located centrally within the polling district and accessible for

people with disabilities.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 Within the constraints of the suitability and availability of the accommodation, polling places are located so as to minimise the distance electors need to travel to cast their vote.

11. ANTI POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

12. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The polling place review exercise is concerned with managing risk at all premises used as polling places

13. IMPLICATIONS FOR CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION

- 13.1 There are no crime and disorder reduction implications arising directly from this report.

APPENDICES (to be circulated at the meeting)

Appendix A: Ward Maps proposed by LGBCE

Appendix B: Schedule of existing polling districts and polling places.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)

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

Brief description of "background paper"	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection
Correspondence from LGBCE	John Williams 020 7364 4204
Electoral Commission guidance on Polling Place review	John Williams 020 7364 4204

Agenda Item 7

By virtue of paragraph(s) 4, 7a of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item 8

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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