

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH AD HOC PANEL

HELD AT 12.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2017

**SPEAKER'S PARLOUR, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Sabina Akhtar (Chair)	Speaker of the Council
Mayor John Biggs	Executive Mayor
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury	
Councillor Peter Golds	Leader of the Conservative Group
Councillor Shafiqul Haque	
Councillor Denise Jones	Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services
Lesley Pavitt	Co-opted Member – appointed at this meeting.

Officers Present:

Janet Fasan	Divisional Director Legal
Matthew Mannion	Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services, Governance
Rushena Miah	Committee Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. It was noted that this was the first meeting of the reconvened Panel in six years.

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed, Councillor Abdul Asad and Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

There were no unrestricted items.

3.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF MEETINGS

Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, presented a report on the Terms of Reference for the Group. He asked the Panel to review and comment on the report.

RESOLVED

1. The Panel noted the report.

3.2 CO-OPTING ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH AD-HOC PANEL

Mr Mannion presented a report on the options available to the Panel for co-opting new Members.

Panel Members voted in favour of co-opting Lesley Pavitt onto the Freedom of the Borough Panel.

There was discussion on the eligibility criteria to join the Panel. The Panel highlighted the importance of maintaining a gender balance whilst considering co-opted members. They expressed concern that the Panel was already overwhelmingly male and advised that opportunities for co-option be targeted at women.

Panel Members were in agreement that representatives from the Voluntary Sector and Chamber of Commerce should be invited to join the Panel to provide a fresh perspective on the nominations process.

Other views were for the Panel to co-opt a representative from the Education Sector. It was suggested a head teacher should be approached to join the Panel.

Janet Fasan, Divisional Director Legal Services, reminded the Panel that co-opting three more members would bring the total membership up to 13 members.

RESOLVED

1. Lesley Pavitt was formally co-opted onto the Freedom of the Borough Panel.
2. The Speaker's Office to seek representation from Tower Hamlets CVS, East London Chamber of Commerce and the Education Sector to encourage the nomination of female co-opted members onto the Freedom of the Borough Panel.

3. Nominations for Co-opted members would be presented to this Panel for decision.

3.3 DETERMINING A PROCESS FOR SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

Mr Mannion, Committee Services Manager, presented a report on the options for determining the process for submitting a nomination. He asked Panel Members for direction.

It was suggested a small article be placed in the East End Life paper and on the Council website to inform the community that the Freedom of the Borough Award has been reinstated.

The Panel requested the article clarifies that the Award is aimed individuals or groups who have made an exemplary contribution to the borough and is different to the Civic Awards.

The Panel agreed to a target of presenting the award to one man and one woman. The Panel also agreed that in order to retain the distinction of the award, the honour will be bestowed on individuals or groups once in a four year term.

It was clarified that this Panel will shortlist nominations and submit a selection of nominees to full Council to vote on at an extraordinary meeting. The nominees will require two-thirds of the Council vote in order to be awarded the honour.

In an effort to distinguish itself from the Civic Award, it was agreed that the process for nomination would consist of contacting the Speaker's Office directly. Panel Members agreed that the eligibility criteria should state that solely being a former Councillor is not sufficient to be put forward for nomination.

It was agreed that nominations would be open to any individual who had made a significant contribution to the borough, regardless of whether they reside in the borough.

It was confirmed the Democratic Services budget would be used to plan a small award ceremony at full Council.

RESOLVED

1. The Communications Team are to place an article in the December edition of the East End Life Newspaper and Council website to promote the launch of the Freedom of the Borough Award.
2. The article to note that nominations will be taken via the Speaker's Office.

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3. The eligibility criteria to state that being a former Councillor is not sufficient for nomination.
4. The deadline for nominations will be mid-January 2018. Nominations will be discussed at the February meeting of this Panel.

4. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 12.56 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Sabina Akhtar
Freedom of the Borough Ad Hoc Panel