

Non-Executive Report of the: Freedom of the Borough Ad Hoc Panel 1 November 2017	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager	Classification: Unrestricted
Co-Opting Additional Members to the Freedom of the Borough Ad-Hoc Panel	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Summary

The Freedom of the Borough Ad-Hoc Panel has been established by the Council to oversee the process for reviewing and forwarding to Council nominations for the Freedom of the Borough.

The Terms of Reference set out the Membership of the Panel but also allow the Panel to consider co-opting additional non-voting Members from outside the Council onto the Panel. This report is presented to allow the Panel to discuss options for co-opting new Panel Members should this be considered desirable.

Recommendations:

The Freedom of the Borough Ad Hoc Panel is recommended to:

1. To consider and respond to the options set out for Co-Opting additional non-voting Members onto the Panel.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Freedom of the Borough Ad-Hoc Panel Terms of Reference allow for the Co-option of additional Non-Voting Members. This report allows for a discussion by the Panel on whether they wish to proceed with this option.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 A number of alternative options are set out in the report. These vary from immediately co-opting further Members, advertising for Co-opted Members or deciding not to appoint any Co-opted Members.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The Membership of the Panel as agreed by Council comprises 'Members of the Council to include the Chair of Council, the Mayor, any former Civic Mayors or Chairs of Council [Speaker] still serving as Councillors, and at least one representative of each political group on the Council.'
- 3.2 The Panel may also co-opt additional non-voting Members including other former Civic Mayors or Chairs of Council, or independent persons drawn from the business, community or public sectors.
- 3.3 In accordance with the above the Panel is asked to consider whether it wishes to co-opt any additional non-voting members to assist in its deliberations.
- 3.4 Co-opting additional Members onto the Panel can be a good way of broadening the reach and knowledge of the Panel and of making sure relevant groups and communities are represented. Examples of the reasons why co-opting Members may be valuable include:
- Ensuring a better gender or ethnic balance
 - Including representatives from business and industry
 - Co-opting past Speakers or Civic Mayors who are no longer Councillors
 - Including representatives from the voluntary and community sectors
- 3.5 Alternatively it should be noted that the Membership of the Panel is already relatively high to accommodate previous Civic Mayors and Speakers and to ensure representation from all political groups so co-opting too many additional Members may make the panel unwieldy and make a consensus more difficult when considering applications for the Freedom of the Borough.
- 3.6 The Panel are therefore ask to discuss the options and come to a view as to the appropriate course of action. Should any names be forthcoming during discussion the Panel could agree to co-opt them to the Panel subject to that individual agreeing to be co-opted. Alternatively officers could explore specific options to report back at a later date.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 Co-opted Members of the Panel would be entitled to the standard allowances for Co-Opted Members as set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme in the Council's Constitution. These allowances would be funded out of the existing Members Allowances budget.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The Council's ability to co-opt members derives from the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 establishes that members of committees appointed under the 1970 and 1972 Acts and who are not elected Councillors do not generally have voting rights. There are exceptions to this rule but which do not apply in this case.
- 5.2 The Terms of Reference to the Panel (see Part 3.3.9 of the Constitution) provides that the Panel may co-opt additional non-voting Members including other former Civic Mayors or Chairs/ Speakers of Council, or independent persons drawn from the business, community or public sectors. The Panel therefore has the authority to adopt further non-voting Members.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Panel will be reviewing all the nominations for the Freedom of the Borough. It is important to ensure that the impact by the nominated candidates across the Tower Hamlet's community is considered when reviewing the nominations. Co-opting Members onto the Panel can help ensure a wider range of knowledge and experience is available to the Panel during these considerations.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None specific to this report.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 None specific to this report.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None specific to this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None specific to this report.

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.