


Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>General Purposes Committee</b>  24 June 2021	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of Janet Fasan, Divisional Director Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer</b>	<b>Classification:</b> [Unrestricted]
<b>Proposed changes to Borough Ward Names</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Robert Curtis, Head of Electoral Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	Bethnal Green Ward, St Peters Ward & Canary Wharf Ward

### Summary

This report informs the Committee of the results of the proposals to change the ward names of Bethnal Green, St Peters & Canary Wharf. A recommendation to change the names was made during the consultation for the Polling District and Polling Places review undertaken by Full Council on 15 January 2020 and the review agreed by GPC on the 6 October 2020

### Recommendations:

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the results of the consultation and to refer for a decision at Full Council whether to amend the names of the Borough Wards as recommended or not.

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

1.1. To ensure compliance with statutory process.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

2.1 None.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

### **3.1 Recommendation received**

3.2 On the 15 January 2020 the Council was, following the review of Polling Districts and Places, asked to determine recommendations from consultees who proposed amendments to the existing polling places and polling districts.

3.3 The report detailed several small amendments but contained within one of the consultation responses, from the Local Campaigns Forum of the Labour Party, was a recommendation that the Council initiate the required steps set out in Section 59 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to amend three ward names, namely:

- changing Bethnal Green Ward to Bethnal Green East
- changing Canary Wharf Ward to Millwall and
- changing St. Peter's Ward to Bethnal Green West

3.4 The council could not undertake the required process because the said recommendation was not considered to be a formal request to change the names. However, it was considered appropriate that the recommendation be brought to the attention of the GPC on the 6 October 2020 to decide if this should be acted on and a formal review instigated.

## **4 Process**

4.1 Under Section 59 of the Local Government & Housing Act 2007, a local authority may change the name of any of its electoral areas. If the area's name is protected, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) must first agree to the proposed change.

An electoral area is "protected" if

(a) The name was given to the electoral area by or in pursuance of an order under section 17 of the Local Government Act 1992 or section 14 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, and

(b) That order was made during the period of five years ending with the day on which a resolution to change the name is to be passed.

4.2 As the Council's ward names were considered at the time of the Periodic Electoral Review in 2013 and instigated in 2014 i.e. more than 5 years ago, the names of the current Wards are not protected and can be changed by resolution of the Council.

4.3 The resolution to change the name of an electoral area must be passed at a meeting which is specially convened for the purpose of deciding the resolution with notice of the object and by a majority of at least two thirds of the meeting.

4.4 The local authority must not pass the resolution unless it has taken reasonable steps to consult such persons it considers appropriate on the

proposed name. The change of name does not take effect until the LGBCE has been given notice of the change.

As soon as practicable after a resolution is passed, the local authority must give notice of the change of name to all the following -

- (a) The Electoral Commission
- (b) The Boundary Commission for England
- (c) The Office of National Statistics
- (d) The Director General of the Ordnance Survey.

4.5 On 6 October 2020 GPC considered the recommendation and decided that the changes proposed be subject to consultation and this was passed to the Councils Strategy, Policy & Performance Division within the Governance Directorate to undertake.

## 5. **Survey**

- 5.1 The survey was carried out on the council's consultation hub, Let's Talk Tower Hamlets, was promoted on the council's website, Our East End and via social media channels.
- 5.2 22,000 emails were also sent to electors in the three directly affected wards directing them to the portal where the survey and information was held.
- 5.3 The consultation took place between 22nd November 2020 and 2nd February 2021.
- 5.4 The survey comprised of a questionnaire with three questions for each of the three proposed ward name changes being consulted on:
  - 1. Would you like to respond to the suggestion to change the name of x ward? Yes/No
  - 2. We have received a suggestion to change the name of x ward to y.
  - 3. Do you want to make any other comments on the suggestions to change the name of the ward?
- 5.5 The open-ended questions in the consultation questionnaire were coded into themes to allow the responses to be quantified. This encompassed reading every response and the creation of a code frame of key themes.
- 5.6 The results of the survey are detailed in the power point presentation provided in Appendix A and a summary provided in Appendix C.
- 5.7 Responses were also received from Cllr Golds and Cllr A Wood and these are attached at Appendix B but were not considered in the formal survey data because the comments were not received through the approved survey portal.

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

6.1 There are no specific financial implications arising the recommendation in this report

7. **LEGAL COMMENTS**

7.1 Legal comments have been incorporated into this report.

8. **ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 There are no equalities or diversity implications arising from this report

9. **BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no implications arising from this report

10. **SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

10.1 There are no SAGE implications arising from this report.

11 **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

12 **CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

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**Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

**Linked Report**

- NONE.

**Appendices**

Appendix A: Consultation results (Power Point)

Appendix B: Submission of Cllr A Wood and Cllr Peter Golds)

Appendix C: Summary of results

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended) list of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

- NONE.

**Officer contact details for documents:**

- Robert Curtis, Head of Electoral Services

Cllr Peter Golds – received Tue 15/12/2020 10:27

I have also spoken to residents.

The view is that the status quo should remain, and this has certainly hardened since the incident at Millwall. This has been entirely driven by Canary Wharf Group. There has not been any local upsurge of opinion on the whole matter.

Canary Wharf, like the council, the government and the nation have many overriding issues to consider. The expense of renaming a local government ward is not one of any relevance and should be put aside until a future wholesale review of boundaries.

It should be noted that this arose last time and the name Canary Wharf as a ward was by far the most popular option in the consultation undertaken by the LGBCE.

Cllr Andrew Wood – received Mon 14/12/2020 10:12

Following the launch of the consultation on ward names I ran a poll across three social media sites, started 4th December with 958 responses as at Saturday morning on the proposal to change the Canary Wharf ward name.

The results so far are:

- 62% Waste of time & money - in the text I made clear this meant no change
- 25% Canary Wharf (no change) (22%+3% responses below)
- 7% Millwall & Canary Wharf - my proposed compromise solution, like Blackwall & Cubitt Town, St Katharine's & Wapping wards
- 6% Millwall
- 0.4% Other options

I was surprised that Millwall got such a low response as well as my compromise solution, but we had the controversy last weekend over Millwall fans booing Millwall FC players taking the knee which may have affected some people.

This happened after I started the poll.

Two weeks ago, I reported to the Police some stickers left around Millwall Park on the Isle of Dogs, all left by Millwall Berserkers/NTO, a well-known football hooligan group. The Police called me back last Thursday to confirm they are treating it as a hate crime.

I have not put these stickers in the public domain yet as to have done so while undertaking the poll would have been to skew the results even though it is very unfair to link the ward with a football club that left the area over a hundred years ago. But the Police did ask me to keep an eye out for them. But it may also explain why the Millwall name is not that popular with some members of the community.

If the referendum next May picks the Leader & Cabinet model, we may have to reverse the 2014 reduction in Cllrs from 50 to 45 through another Boundary review. When we do that would be an appropriate time to look at this issue again + population/voter growth underway in some parts of TH.

But I think the comments and poll are clear, this is not the time to change the ward name and the Millwall name has some issues.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Residents have asked whether you will consider these poll responses or not, I did advertise the formal consultation link as well so am curious to see what those look like given that the consultation will last until February 2021.



Below are links to the three polls, you may find the comments interesting.

Facebook on the Canary Wharf & Isle of Dogs residents' group (which is mainly composed of E14 residents)

It also had 63 comments and was seen by over 5,000 people of whom 746 responded

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1458438024296291/permalink/2898125163660896/>

**Twitter on my profile (mainly followed by people in TH)**

462 people read the tweet of whom 189 responded

<https://twitter.com/Andrewwood17/status/1334822790734753792?s=20>

Nextdoor (3 local areas only)

23 responses so far, advertised only in the areas in the ward plus Millwall South

[https://nextdoor.co.uk/p/4J9cchJzG\\_NP?utm\\_source=share](https://nextdoor.co.uk/p/4J9cchJzG_NP?utm_source=share)

<b>Poll on Canary Wharf ward name</b>							
	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>FB %</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Twitter %</b>	<b>Nextdoor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Waste of time & money	523	70%	58	31%	11	<b>592</b>	62%
Canary Wharf (no change)	141	19%	62	33%	6	<b>209</b>	22%
Millwall & Canary Wharf	37	5%	23	12%	5	<b>65</b>	7%
Millwall	12	2%	46	24%	1	<b>59</b>	6%
Waste of time & money but keep CW	29	4%				<b>29</b>	3%
Other options added by others	4	1%				<b>4</b>	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Poll on Canary Wharf Ward name**

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# Screenshots

- Added by you  
A waste of time & money 523 votes
- Added by you  
Canary Wharf (no change) 141 votes
- Added by you  
Millwall & Canary Wharf 37 votes
- Added by [redacted]  
Waste of time & money, but maintain Canary Wharf 29 votes
- Added by you  
Millwall 12 votes
- Added by [redacted]  
The Canary Wharf estate be the Canary Wharf ward. The remainder to be called Millwall ward. 2 votes
- Added by [redacted]  
' Isle of Towers ' 1 vote
- Added by [redacted]  
Isle of Dogs 1 vote

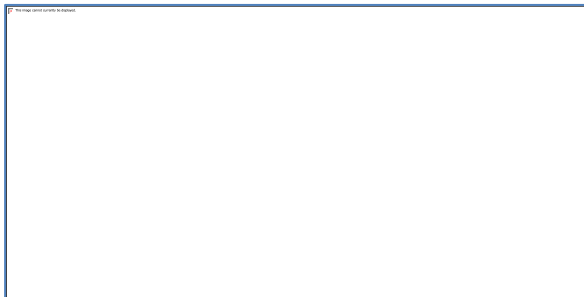
1/

Millwall & Canary Wharf	12.2%
<b>Canary Wharf (no change)</b>	<b>32.8%</b>
Millwall	24.3%
A waste of time & £	30.7%

189 votes · Final results

11:32 AM · Dec 4, 2020 · Twitter Web App

[View Tweet activity](#)



**Summary of survey results**

369 responses were received  
6 responses were deemed invalid  
363 valid responses were recorded

94% of respondents responded as individuals  
2% responded on behalf of local businesses  
4% said "other"

Ward	Keep current name	Change name	Suggest another name
Bethnal Green Ward	50%	45%	5%
St. Peter's Ward	47%	44%	9%
Canary Wharf Ward	89%	8%	3%