

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH AD HOC PANEL

HELD AT 8.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2011

**MEETING ROOM M78, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman (Chair)	(Chair of Council)
Councillor Abdul Asad	
Councillor Craig Aston	
Councillor Stephanie Eaton	(Leader, Liberal Democrat Group)
Councillor Denise Jones	
John Ludgate	(Deputy Lieutenant for Tower Hamlets)

Other Councillors Present:

Officers Present:

Kevan Collins	– (Chief Executive)
Isabella Freeman	– (Assistant Chief Executive - Legal Services, Chief Executive's)
John Williams	– (Service Head, Democratic Services, Chief Executive's)
Caroline Chalklin	– (Committee Officer, Chief Executives')

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Mayor and Councillor Ahmed Omer.

1.1 CO-OPTED MEMBER OF THE PANEL

It was **resolved**: That Commander John Ludgate, the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Tower Hamlets be co-opted to the Panel.

The decision was unanimous.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None made.

3. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Honorary Freedom of the Borough

Mr Williams presented the report, informing Members that the Honorary Freedom of the Borough was the highest award the Council could bestow, and was rarely given; the last award was in 1999. The award was approved by a 2/3rd majority of Council, and the meeting would then be followed by a reception in honour of the recipients. The criterion for the award was that the candidate had rendered exceptional service of the highest distinction to the borough and its residents. It was unusual to have a single nomination.

The following points were made:

- Councillor Jones commented that it would be cheaper to have more than one award
- Councillor Eaton said the request for the award could take place at the civic awards or the Annual Council for the reception
- The Chair indicated that there might not be a reception at Annual Council for the Municipal Year 2011/12
- Councillor Eaton suggested it could be presented at a meeting in the borough
- The Chair said that the award could be presented separately from the night at which Council agreed the award; this award could be presented at the Civic Awards ceremony
- Councillor Asad felt that there had not been much publicity for the award in the past, but there should be more publicity, so residents knew about the award and recipient
- Councillor Jones said that the Honorary Freedom of the City of London was quite low-key, no publicity and a private ceremony at the Guildhall accompanying the presentation of a scroll
- Councillor Aston expressed concern about the logistics at Budget Council
- Mr Williams suggested a Special Council meeting prior to the Budget Council meeting, but emphasised that there would need to be full agreement to the award prior to the Special Council meeting
- Councillor Eaton suggested that criteria should be laid down before receiving any nominations
- The Chair said that all the preceding awards of Honorary Freedom of the Borough had not been considered in relation to any written criteria
- Councillor Asad said that the criteria should be publicised for the public
- Ms Freeman said that the criteria would not be publicised for the public to apply it's a council matter
- The Chair said that it was for the Panel to decide on names to put forward and to ensure there was sufficient support amongst Members
- Commander Ludgate said that as only 25 people had received the award, it was more special than the Honorary Freedom of the City of London. The Panel might consider using the criteria used for national

awards: high value, probity, sustainability etc. The criteria could be found on the Greater London Lieutenancy website (<http://greaterlondonlieutenancy.org.uk>). The award would be recognised across all sections of the community and across the boundaries of Tower Hamlets. It was a huge honour

- Mr Williams reminded the panel that the decision is made by two thirds majority at council so when candidates were agreed at the panel then the parties needed to ensure that this would get party support at the council meeting.
- The chief executive suggested that there may be a conflict if businessmen are put forward if they have dealings with the borough. Those present agreed that this was a factor that needed to be considered. It was also agreed that any potential candidate would have to confirm they were able to accept the honour.
- Ms Freeman suggested that perhaps the Chair would invite all the councillors to put forward candidates based on the new criteria that will be adopted. This could be done within the next 2 weeks so a report back could come to the next meeting for decision.

4. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **Resolved:**

That pursuant to regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting:

- (a) As it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted in Section Two of the agenda, that if members of the public were present during consideration of this business there would be disclosure of exempt information.
- Exempt information is defined in section 100I and, by reference, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”). To be exempt, information must fall within one of the categories listed in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Schedule 12A, must not fall within one of the excluded categories in paragraphs 8 and 9 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption must outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

6. RESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

7. ANY OTHER RESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman
Freedom of the Borough Ad Hoc Panel