

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2024

**COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWER HAMLETS TOWN HALL, 160 WHITECHAPEL
ROAD, LONDON E1 1BJ**

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Shafi Ahmed (Chair)
Councillor Saied Ahmed
Councillor Kabir Ahmed
Councillor Sabina Akhtar
Councillor Asma Begum
Councillor Rebaka Sultana
Councillor Maium Talukdar

Apologies:

Councillor Peter Golds

Officers Present in Person:

Matthew Mannion (Head of Democratic Services)
Joel West (Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Lorraine Feyi-Shonubi (Governor Services Officer)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

2. MINUTES

The unrestricted minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 12 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record, subject to noting that Councillor Asma Begum was present virtually.

3. WORK PLAN

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Local Authority Governor Applications Feb 2024

Lorraine Feyi-Shonubi, Governance and Clerking Manager, introduced the report that set out details of applicants who had applied to be nominated as the local authority governor at Tower Hamlets maintained schools. The report also included, at Appendix A, supplementary information on the processes and support mechanisms involved in identifying and nominating suitable candidates for the position of Local Authority governor, in response to a request made by the Committee at its previous meeting.

Further to questions from the Committee on the confidential appendices, Lorraine explained that the question regarding applicants' length of residency in the borough was ambiguous, leading to differing interpretations by candidates on whether it related to days or months, and accordingly asked members to disregard the figures presented under those sections. Lorraine explained that the form had since been amended and the problem rectified.

Regarding Appendix A to the report, members welcomed the steps taken to increase applications for, and diversity among school governors. It was noted that further information on the initiatives, additional budgets and a detailed analysis on the results of this work would be welcomed by the Committee.

However, some member of the Committee indicated disappointment with the information presented which they felt:

- did not explain how the Council could ensure that local authority nominated governors sufficiently represented the local community; and
- did not explain why so many applicants for local authority nominations came from outside of the borough; and
- did not include sufficiently detailed information on the selection criteria of governors, as had been requested.

Members indicated they were content to approve the nominees as listed, but asked that these concerns be addressed in full at the next available opportunity.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Agree to nominate the applicants to the positions that are available for local authority governors at maintained schools in Tower Hamlets as set out in the report.

4.2 Constitution Updates

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report that asked the Committee to agree some terms of reference changes for a number of Committees and also provided a brief update on the work of the Constitution Working Group (CWG). On the latter, Matthew explained that CWG had been developing initial workstreams and that whilst those were being developed the Association of Democratic Services Officers had been

asked to undertake an initial review of the Constitution to ensure its legal compliance and to offer any other suggestions for improvements. A meeting of the CWG was scheduled for 12 March 2024, but given the recent departure of the Council's Monitoring Officer, the date may need to be reconsidered.

Further to point 9 in the General Purposes Committee proposed new terms of reference, members asked that further advice be provided on whether political proportionality should also be reflected in addition to the existing provision for ethnicity and gender balance.

RESOLVED that the General Purposes Committee:

1. Agree the updates to the Constitution set out in Appendices 1 – 2 to the report and in Paragraph 9 of the report
2. Note that the changes listed in Appendix 1 to the report come into force for the new municipal year.
3. To note the remaining contents of the report including the Terms of Reference of the Health and Wellbeing Board set out at Appendix 3 to the report.
4. Requests further advice on the implications of implementing a political proportionality element to any appeal sub committees within the terms of reference of General Purposes Committee.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

A resolution to exclude press and public was not required.

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Shafi Ahmed
General Purposes Committee