

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2011**

**COMMITTEE ROOM, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE  
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Shiria Khatun (Chair)

Councillor Sirajul Islam  
Councillor Tim Archer

Councillor Marc Francis  
Councillor David Edgar

**Officers Present:**

Paul Greeno	– (Senior Advocate)
John Williams	– (Service Head, Democratic Services, Chief Executive's)
Heather Bonfield	– (Interim Service Head Cultural Services , Communities Localities & Culture)
Louise Stamp	– (Electoral Services Manager, Chief Executive's)
Zoe Folley	– (Committee Officer, Democratic Services Chief Executive's)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from the following Councillors

Mizanur Chaudhury, and Mohammed Abdul Mukit for whom Councillors David Edgar and Marc Francis were deputising.

Gloria Thienel for whom Councillor Tim Archer was deputising.

**RESOLVED**

That the apologies for absence be noted.

Apologies for absence were received from the following Councillors

Mizanur Chaudhury and Mohammed Abdul Mukit for whom Councillors David Edgar and Marc Francis were deputising.

Gloria Thienel for whom Councillor Tim Archer was deputising.

**RESOLVED**

That the apologies for absence be noted.

**2. RE-ELECTION OF VICE-CHAR**

The Chair nominated Councillor Sirajul Islam as Vice Chair of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Marc Francis seconded the nomination.

There being no other nominations it was:-

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Sirajul Islam be elected to serve as Vice – Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2011-2012.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

The Committee **RESOLVED**

That the Section One minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Committee held on 22 June 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

**5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**5.1 Data Matching Pilot 2011**

Reasons for Special Urgency and Circumstances **Agreed**

Mr John Williams (Service Head Democratic Services) and Ms Louise Stamp (Electoral Services Manager) presented the report.

Ms Stamp explained the purpose of and the timetable for the pilot and the challenges in data matching as required. She also explained the move to Individual Registration (IER) to be introduced in 2014 and the significant amount of work involved in the exercise together with the boundary reviews.

Members then asked questions of Officers.

Concerning IER, concern was expressed at the potential impact on voter registration, in that there could be a drop in levels. It was feared that this would mainly affect the disadvantaged areas and non English speakers. In view of this, support was expressed for an equal opportunities assessment of the changes.

Other matters raised were the purpose of IER, the merits of voluntary rather than mandatory registration and when this would be decided.

Members also asked about the costs and purpose of the data matching exercise whether it would be funded by government, the canvassing process in LBTH and the efforts made to canvass hard to reach areas.

Officers addressed each question from the Committee. In particular Ms Stamp explained the annual canvass process in Tower Hamlets (comprising personal canvassing and then postal stages) with the former generating a far greater return.

An aim of the data matching pilot was to identify non registered residents and target fraud.

The government was developing the IER proposals and there was a recommendation in the proposals that registration should be voluntary. Steps were being taken to canvass the difficult to access areas. Officers were aware of such places and were targeting them to raise responses.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the data matching pilot report is noted.

## **5.2 Local Government Boundary Review 2012**

### **Reasons for Special Urgency and Circumstances Agreed**

Mr John Williams (Service Head Democratic Services) presented the report explaining the purpose of the local boundary review to commence in January 2012. Officers reported that the deadline for submissions to the Boundary Commission was 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Anyone could make a submission to the Commission, who following this initial stage, would determine the scope of the review required in Tower Hamlets.

Members then referred to the figures in Appendix A (Wards potentially requiring review). It was emphasised that, when circulated, this be updated with latest statistics and include the variances for each ward. Preferably, there should be a one sheet summary of the current figures with ward variances.

Members also asked to receive copies of any additional information circulated for this review and expressed an interest in seeing examples of submissions for guidance.

Other issues addressed were: use of the 2011 census results, the relationship of this review to the Parliamentary Constituencies and the timetable for the Polling Place Review.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the report be noted;
2. That it also be noted that Representatives of the LGBCE will address Councillors prior to the next full Council meeting and the political groups on the Council will then be consulted by the LGBCE and invited to submit proposals on Council Size prior to the start of the Review in January 2012.

### **5.3 Boundary Commission for England - Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review 2013**

#### Reasons for Special Urgency and Circumstances **Agreed**

Mr John Williams (Service Head, Democratic Services) presented the report regarding the Boundary Review, explaining the key points and the process. Attention was drawn to the proposals in relation to London (Appendix A) and the Mayor's proposed response to the consultation (Appendix B).

At the request of the Committee, Mr Williams explained the decision making process within the Council for such matters. Responsibility for agreeing the Council's submission rested with this Committee. However there was nothing to prevent any other source/individual making submissions to the Boundary Commission.

The Committee noted the Mayors response.

Councillor David Edgar then moved, and Councillor Shiria Khatun seconded, an amendment to the recommendations:- "That the proposed submission from the Mayor be circulated to the Political Group Leaders and that the Committee meet again before the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 to agree the Council's submission to the Boundary Commission for England on the Parliamentary Boundaries Review; and to consider further the Local Electoral Review in the light of further information from the Local Government Boundary Commission". This was **agreed**.

It was also debated whether following consideration by the Committee, its recommendations (proposed Council's response) should be referred to Full Council for consideration. Officers advised that this was constitutionally

possible but it would be necessary to explore the practicalities in view of the timescale.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the UK Parliamentary Boundary initial recommendations for Tower Hamlets be noted.
2. That the proposed submission from the Mayor be circulated to the Political Group Leaders and that the Committee meet again before the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 to agree the Council's submission to the Boundary Commission for England on the Parliamentary Boundaries Review; and to consider further the Local Electoral Review in the light of further information from the Local Government Boundary Commission.

#### **5.4 Byelaws for Parks and Open Spaces**

Heather Bonfield (Head of Culture) presented the report which detailed proposals to adopt new Byelaws for the boroughs Parks and Open Spaces. It was intended that the new Byelaws would improve understanding of their aims and help to ensure acceptable behaviour in parks so that residents and visitors could fully enjoy them.

The Committee considered a copy of, and the need for, the new Byelaws (Appendix 1), the consultation undertaken (Appendix 2), a gap analysis with primary legislation (Appendix 3), a summary of the changes compared to existing Byelaws (Appendix 4), and existing Byelaws (Appendix 5).

In response, a Member queried the exclusion of river walkways from the proposals. Mr Paul Greeno (Senior Advocate) explained the reasons for this. The Council possessed statutory powers to make certain Byelaws but not on river walkways. Consideration could be given to whether they could be regulated by other legislation to achieve the desired aim.

Questions were also raised regarding responsible drinking in parks (covered by other Acts); Byelaw enforcement action (explained in section 5 of report); and the arrangements for publicising Byelaws.

In relation to the new Byelaws, Members raised the following points:

Cycling (14). - Concern was expressed at speeding cyclists in parks seen as a dangerous. It was asked whether under this byelaw, speed limits could be imposed on cyclists to address this. One idea was to display notices in parks stating speed limits. The Committee noted the difficulties in enforcing such action. Further consideration could be given to finding measures to prevent this problem.

Barbeques (other than designated areas) (11). - It was suggested that the practices at other Authorities with regard to this area should be explored. In particular, the outcome of their consultations on this matter could be looked at.

A Member also asked whether Byelaws could be used to address spitting in parks. Although dealt with under other legislation, Officers could raise this with the Department of Communities and Local Government for consideration.

### **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL**

1. That the New Byelaws for the borough's Parks and Open Spaces be made as shown in Appendix 1 ('New Byelaws') of the circulated report, and the Existing Byelaws are revoked once the New Byelaws are confirmed;
2. That the New Byelaws are applied to the parks and open space areas listed within Schedule 1 & 2 contained within Appendix 1 of the circulated report;
3. That it be noted that there are a range of issues and offences already covered by primary legislation which are therefore excluded from the New Byelaws (as outlined in Appendix 3 of the circulated report).
4. That it be noted that the New Byelaws will need to be approved by the Secretary of State, so officers are in ongoing discussions with DCLG on their suitability. Some changes have been made to the DCLG's Model Byelaws, as set out in paragraphs 4.2.6 to 4.2.9 of the circulated report. Should DCLG indicate that these changes might jeopardise approval by the Secretary of State, officers will amend the New Byelaws as appropriate, prior to submission to Full Council.

## **5.5 Outside Bodies**

Reasons for Special Urgency and Circumstances **Agreed.**

Mr John Williams (Service Head, Democratic Services) presented the report regarding appointments to outside bodies. It was noted that since June 2011, a number of vacancies on outside bodies had arisen as set out in the circulated report. The Committee were asked to consider the schedule of vacancies and appoint to them accordingly.

### **Docklands Sailing and Water Sports Centre**

Following Councillor Maium Miah's change in political allegiance (appointed to the above in June), the Committee were asked to review this appointment. It was proposed and the Committee **agreed** that Councillor David Snowdon should replace him as the Council's representative on the body.

### **Local Government Group Urban Commission**

The Committee were asked to appoint up to two persons to represent the Council on the Commission (two Members or one Member plus one officer). The positions have been vacant since June, when no nominations had been received.

It was proposed and the Committee **agreed** that Councillor David Edgar be appointed to one of the positions.

It was further **agreed** that the remaining second position be referred back to Political Groups for nominations and consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

### **London City Airport Consultative Committee**

Councillor Josh Peck was appointed to the above Committee in June 2011 but due to work commitments was unable to attend the committee's meetings which took place during the daytime. The deputy position was already vacant.

Therefore the Committee were asked to appoint to each position.

No nominations were received. It was therefore **agreed** that the positions be referred back to Political Groups for nominations and considered again at the next meeting of the Committee.

### **St Katherine's and Shadwell Trust**

The Committee were asked to appoint one Member and one Deputy Member to the above Trust following a reduction in representation required. Four nominations had been received for the two positions available (Councillors Abdul Asad, Denise Jones, Abdal Ullah and Dr Emma Jones).

Councillor Archer **moved** that Councillors Denise Jones and Dr Emma Jones be appointed to the two positions. This motion was seconded and put to the vote and was **not agreed** by the Committee.

Councillor Marc Francis then **moved** that Councillors Denise Jones and Abdal Ullah be appointed to the two positions as Member and Deputy respectively. This motion was seconded and put to the vote and was **agreed** by the Committee.

### **Thames Gateway London Partnership**

Following Councillor Shafiqul Haque's change of political allegiance, the Committee were asked to review this appointment. It was proposed and the Committee **agreed** that Councillor Judith Gardiner be appointed to replace Councillor Haque on the Partnership.

### **Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf Further Education Trust**

Following Councillor Abdul Asad's resignation as one of the Council's representatives on the Trust, the Committee were asked to appoint a Member to replace him.

It was proposed and the Committee **agreed** that Councillor Lesley Pavitt be appointed to the position.

#### **Tower Hamlets Sports Council**

Following Councillor Maium Miah's change in political allegiance the Committee were asked to review his appointment as one of the Council's representatives on the above.

Councillor Archer **moved** that Councillor Peter Golds be appointed to the position. This motion was not seconded.

Councillor Archer then **moved** that Councillor David Snowdon be appointed to the position. This motion was seconded and put to the vote and was **agreed** by the Committee.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the appointments be made to outside bodies as set out in the table attached at Appendix A to these minutes
2. That the outstanding vacancies be referred back to the Political Groups to seek further nominations in accordance and considered again at the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Shiria Khatun  
General Purposes Committee