

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.40 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2012

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

Members Present:

Councillor Shiria Khatun (Chair)
Councillor John Pierce
Councillor David Edgar (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ahmed Adam Omer
Councillor Craig Aston

Officers Present:

Isabella Freeman	– Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services),
John Williams	– Service Head, Democratic Services
Hania Franek	– Head of School Governance and Information
Evelyn Akoto	– Democratic Services, Committee Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Aminur Khan, and Cllr Golds for whom Cllr Aston was deputising.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

Subject to the following amendment, it was **RESOLVED** that the unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2012 were agreed and approved as a correct record.

- Cllr Ahmed Adam Omer would like it to be noted that he was not aware of the meeting on 3 July 2012 and so was not in a position to give his apologies.
- Cllr Craig Aston stated that he was at the meeting, but his attendance was not recorded.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Appointments to Outside Organisations

Isabella Freeman, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services), provided the committee with a verbal update. She stated that the report on Appointment to Outside Organisations was not available, but that she had spoken with the Mayor who had expressed his wish to retain his Executive powers to make appointment to external bodies. The Mayor will be given the definitive list of appointments and will thereafter hold discussions with the group leaders.

Responding to questions, officers stated that:

- The Executive does have clear executive powers as set out in the Constitution.
- There are vacancies, but a vast majority have continued to be filled by those who were in the post last year. The officer stated that existing vacant posts will be highlighted to the Mayor as urgent when he reviews the list, so that appointments can be made as soon as possible.
- The committee has no power of ratification or to make suggestions, as the decision ultimately rests with the Mayor. However, the committee still holds power to make appointments that are not related to or in support of an executive function, or where the appointment carries remuneration as the council excluded any paid appointments from the Mayors powers on the current list.

Action:

- The appointments list and a previous report outlining the appointing powers of the Mayor and that of the General Purpose committee will be circulated to members.
- Members will be kept updated with the progress of the appointments being made.

RESOLVED

That the verbal update be noted.

4.2 Local Electoral Review 2012 - update

John Williams, Service Head Democratic Services, introduced the update report. He informed the committee that the second stage of the electoral review was completed on Tuesday 11 September 2012. This round of consultation was about boundaries and how many members will be elected by each of the new wards. He stated that 12 submissions were received by the Boundary Commission in response to the consultation, and there were currently 10 of those submissions on the website.

He highlighted a number of points including:

- There were three comprehensive submissions on the whole borough. One from the Conservative, Labour and another from the Mayor. In

addition there were other submissions such as one from a member of the public but only about the Spitalfields area. There were two further less detailed submissions from the London Dockers club, and another member of the public which focused on the Shadwell ward. There were also a number of letters of support for the labour group submission.

- The Local Government Boundary Commission will consider all submissions received and will shortly draft recommendations concerning ward arrangements in November 2012. There will then be further consultation on the draft recommendations, before the final decision is made. That decision could be based on submissions received or based on elements from various submissions, and will be communicated to the council.
- Final recommendations are to be published in March 2013

Responding to questions, officers stated that

- The commission have indicated that they will speak to groups if they have queries about their submission.
- The officers confirmed that GIS maps have been submitted for all three submissions. The intention is not to publicise them as specialist software is required in order to view them. The officer suggested that the maps could be circulated to members, but he would have to seek prior advice from IT.
- On the basis of the last two consultations, it is likely that the final stage of consultation will be displayed on the website, accompanied by press releases to inform the public.
- In terms of the numbers of electors, the census data has been projected forward by reference to what is known about new potential developments in parts of the borough and how many electors that will generate. The commission have used mailing lists provided by Tower Hamlets to reach all communities within the borough.

The committee discussed the report and noted particular issues including:

- The importance of getting all sections of the community involved in the consultation so that they are made aware of the proposed changes. The officer stated that he will refer this matter to the consultation team as an issue for further probing.
- Some members of the committee expressed their sadness about the planned reduction of members from 51 to 45. They supported the current level of councillors, and would like this to be noted and expressed to full council when the final report is presented.

The committee expressed their gratitude to Benn Huntley and John Williams, and other officers who were involved in assisting members with their submissions.

Action:

- Email members links of the online submissions.
- Officers to find out whether the draft recommendation due out in November will be brought to the committee for discussion.

RESOLVED

- That the report be noted

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair moved to exclude press and public from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of Section Two (restricted) business on the grounds that it contained information defined as exempt in part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The categories defined as:
"1. Information relating to an individual."

RESOLVED

That press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

7. EXEMPT REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION

7.1 School Governor appointment to Rachel Keeling School

This item was considered in closed session.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

The Chair **MOVED** and it was agreed by the committee that future General Purposes meetings will commence at an earlier time of 7pm.

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Shiria Khatun
General Purposes Committee