

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2012

**MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Shiria Khatun (Chair)
Councillor David Edgar
Councillor Craig Aston
Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed

Other Councillors Present:

Officers Present:

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from Cllr Ahmed Adam Omer

The Chair asked John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services to write to the members of the committee that have missed several meetings and in most cases have not sent their apology for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 13 September 2012, were agreed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising:

A member enquired about the appointment list for outside organisations as discussed at the last meeting. John Williams replied that following the meeting, information regarding Appointments was circulated to members. The

Mayor was made aware of the list of appointments and it was his intention to speak to group leaders before he made any changes. However, it is understood that this meeting has not taken place. Officers have however written to organisations to confirm that all appointments in place at the start of the year have rolled on, excluding those who due to constitutional changes, no longer require such appointments.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Local Electoral Review: Update

John Williams, Service Head Democratic Services, presented the update report to the committee, and highlighted the following:

- The first stage of the review about council size was completed back in June 2012, with the Commission indicating that they are minded to propose a council size of 45 councillors. Consultation then took place on warding patterns.
- The Commission considered all responses and published its draft recommendations on 13 November 2012, confirming their recommendation of council size of 45, and proposing a ward pattern which incorporates some of the submissions received. Summary recommendation is for 20 wards with 2 single member wards, 11 two member wards and 7 with 3 member wards.
- The matter was discussed at Council at the end of November 2012, with a focus on wards names. At that meeting, the Council agreed a motion to retain the name of Banglatown. A letter will be sent to the Boundary Commission to reconsider the change of this ward name and the reduction of member size.

In response to questions, officers gave the following answers:

- The draft recommendations are out for consultation until 7 January 2013, and officers are helping with further group submissions. Group Leaders need to ensure that final comments are submitted before the deadline.
- The officer confirmed that the letter being drafted to the Boundary Commission will be made available to the committee.

Action:

John Williams to circulate to committee members a copy of the letter being sent to the Local Government Boundary Commission.

RESOLVED

- That the information in the report, and verbal update provided at the meeting be noted.

4.2 Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review 2013: Update

John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services presented the Constituency Boundary review update report to the committee and highlighted the following:

- The Parliamentary voting system and Constituencies Act 2011 requires the total number of constituencies in the UK to be reduced from 650 to 50 and requires greater parity between the number of voters in each constituency.
- The Boundary commission for England (BCE) is therefore currently undertaking a review of Parliamentary Constituency boundaries to take effect in 2013.
- Initial report on BCE's recommendations stated that the two constituencies in Tower Hamlets would remain unchanged. However this has subsequently changed in light of the responses received from neighbouring constituencies during recent consultations.
- The revised proposals now envisage Tower Hamlets being divided between three parliamentary constituencies, with only one being completely within the borough.
- The revised proposals were subject to a consultation period which closed on 10 December 2012. The Commission must make final recommendations by 1st October 2013 and then the process moves to parliament for final confirmation.

In response to questions, the officer gave the following answer:

- The committee could not be informed about the consultation deadline as this is the first meeting of the committee since September 2012. Isabella Freeman, Assistance Chief Executive (Legal Services) added that the council was not initially aware of the publication of the revised proposal. However, as soon as this was made known, group leaders and deputies were informed to ensure that they had the opportunity to comment before the deadline.
- The Commission is now considering all the submissions received and will then table their final proposals. This will be discussed and voted upon in parliament before being finalised.
- Many London boroughs objected to the original proposals which envisaged significant changes to constituency boundaries and more cross-borough constituencies.

RESOLVED

- That the report be noted

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRS CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair **Moved** and it was: -

Resolved:

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government, Act 1972.

6.1 RESTRICTED MINUTES

The restricted minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 13 September 2012, was agreed as a correct record of the proceedings.

6.2 Local Authority Governor Appointments

Please refer to part two minutes

The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Shiria Khatun
General Purposes Committee