

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 23 January 2019	
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services.
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one Motion submitted by an Opposition Group. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, submission of the Opposition Motion for Debate will alternate in sequence between the opposition groups. This Opposition Motion is submitted by the Conservative Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

8 – Opposition Motion by the Conservative Group - Regarding Democracy and Civic Participation Commission

Proposer: Councillor Andrew Wood

Seconder: Councillor Peter Golds

The Council notes:

That Newham Council in November 2018 set out proposals to establish a Democracy and Civic Participation Commission in 2019 to look at options for replacing the Directly Elected Mayor system with recommendations presented to Newham residents and elected representatives. It will look at participatory democracy in its broadest sense and models of council decision-making.

That Lewisham Council in July 2018 set up a Democracy Review Working Group to provide recommendations to Council about how the Council could enhance openness and transparency, further developing public involvement in Council decisions and promoting effective decision-making.

That May 2020 is the 10th anniversary of the referendum in Tower Hamlets to establish a directly elected Mayor. Which means that a referendum could take place in Tower Hamlets after this date to replace the directly elected Mayor system with a different system of governance.

That the Spitalfields & Banglatown Town Council campaign has initiated a Community Governance Review to create a new Town Council in Tower Hamlets.

This council further notes:

That on the 1st January 2019 a campaign was launched to call for a referendum in Tower Hamlets on the directly elected Mayoral system

That 58% of registered voters in Tower Hamlets in the 3rd May 2018 did not vote in the local elections. Compared to 31% not voting in the June 2017 General Election in Tower Hamlets.

That social media and technology are changing the world and how we engage with each other.

That the population of Tower Hamlets is forecast to grow substantially according to this GLA forecast.

Year	2011	2020	2030
Population	256,685	328,043	380,598
Increase on 2011		28%	48%

That Tower Hamlets has one of the youngest and most diverse populations in the country with a number of residents not entitled to vote because of their nationality.

That the UK operates with a very centralised political system.

This Council therefore recommends the following:

1. To set up a Democracy and Civic Participation Commission which will:
 - a. Look at alternative models to a directly elected Mayor including Leader and Cabinet model or a Committee Structure. Procedures have also been amended to enable councils to adopt hybrid approaches to management which they consider suit their particular areas and circumstances.
 - b. Consider work done already by other Councils including Kirklees Borough Council and Cornwall Unitary Council who have held an independent review of governance arrangements, taking evidence from a wide range of sources. Democracy commissions have also been initiated and undertaken by a range of authorities including Birmingham, Liverpool, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire East and Lambeth, all of which have varying degrees of management ranging from an Executive Mayor in Liverpool to the strong leader and Cabinet model.
 - c. That we will encourage devolution and hand back power and resources to communities where appropriate to encourage greater participation in local decisions.
 - d. That we will look at extending democracy locally
 - e. That we will ensure that we take the right decisions at the right level, that where local knowledge is key, we take decisions locally but where economies of scale dictate centralised decision making that we do so. That the Commission will look at how we find the right balance as to where and at what level decisions should be made.
 - f. Look at work done internationally. Tower Hamlets is one of the most international places in the world and in its height, density and massing is becoming very different to even the rest of London.
2. That any working group set up has membership reflecting all political parties in Tower Hamlets as well as stakeholders from the wider community as well as taking inputs from academia.
3. That it should engage all residents in the process with a particular objective of improving their knowledge not only of the powers of local government but how residents can contribute to the exercising of those powers.
4. That this should report back to the January 2020 full Council meeting, a year from now. That it should include information about the different governance options available through referendums, how we can devolve power and resources and how we get more people to engage in local politics