


<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Council</p> <p style="text-align: center;">17 July 2019</p>	
<p>Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Petition Debate - Stop Stepney Green Boy's School becoming a mixed school</p>	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Petition Scheme provides that where a petition includes the names, addresses and signatures of at least 2,000 persons who live, work or study in the borough, the petitioners may request that a debate be held about the petition at the full Council meeting. This is additional to and distinct from the provision in the Council's Constitution that a petition with at least 30 signatures may be presented to (but not debated by) the Council. The relevant extract from the Petition Scheme is attached at Appendix A.

2. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERING PETITIONS FOR DEBATE

- 2.1 The standard format for a Petition Debate for debate is as follows.
- The petitioners to present their petition for a maximum of three minutes.
 - Questions and answers for four minutes.
 - Debate for 15 minutes. All speeches are limited to a maximum of three minutes
 - The Speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) a Cabinet Member to respond to the matters raised
 - If no motion is moved during the debate, the petition will stand referred to the relevant Corporate Director for a written response.

3. MOTIONS ON THE PETITION

- 3.1 During his or her speech any Member may move a motion for the Council's consideration relevant to matters in the petition (this does not require the suspension of standing orders). It is requested that Motions relating to the petition be submitted to Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director,

Governance and Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to allow full circulation.

- 3.2 Following the petition debate, any motions moved will be put to the vote.
- 3.3 In relation to executive functions, the Council does not have powers to override any executive decision of the Mayor or substitute its own decision. The Council may however pass a motion expressing a view on the matter or referring the matter to the Mayor, calling on him to take some action, or consider or reconsider a decision, with recommendations to inform that consideration. Officers will advise on the constitutional validity of any motion that may be moved

4. CONTENT OF THE PETITION

- 4.1 A petition containing over 2,000 signatures has been received for consideration at the Council meeting on the subject of Stop Stepney Green Boy's School becoming a mixed school

The text of the petition is below:

We, the undersigned existing/potential parents and the local and wider community of Stepney Green Boys' School, would like to object to the proposal of converting the single gender boys' school into a mixed school. The undeniable fact, that many parents have chosen this school for their child/ren purely on the basis that it is a single gender school.

Thus the demand of parents' and students' right of choice is respected by keeping the school as a single gender school. An effective consultation should be open to all parents, prospective parents and the wider community, and must be unanimously conducted. Similarly, the report on the consultations should be available to the parents, prospective parents and interested stakeholders.

The rationale for our demand is as follows:

- Parental choice has to be given. It is our choice that our sons continue to attend a boys' school. Parents have chosen to place their children here as it is a boys' school.
- Converting the school takes away the right of children to attend a boys' school in the Borough.
- There are no other secular and non-religious boys' school left in the Borough.
- Educational standard and financial stability are not impacted whether the school is single sex or mixed. It depends on many other relevant factors.
- The school has had good results for many years. The school has not been held back due to it being a boys' school.
- The school should consult and respect the views of the parents, other stakeholders and the local community.

- Single gender faith schools in Tower Hamlets are achieving well. Single gender boys' schools are also achieving well in the
- UK.
- It will adversely affect gender balance in Tower Hamlets Schools.
- Currently, the school attracts children from diverse cultural groups in Tower Hamlets and neighbouring Boroughs, which will be impacted if the school is converted to a mixed school.
- Evidence dictate, performance and discipline in single sex schools are higher.
- Teacher retention and recruitment is not dependent on whether it is a single sex school. Other factors play an important role.