


Non-Executive Report of the: General Purposes Committee 6 October 2020	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance	Classification: [Unrestricted]
Proposed changes to Borough Ward Names	

Originating Officer(s)	Robert Curtis, Head of Electoral Services
Wards affected	Bethnal Green, St Peters & Canary Wharf

Summary

This report informs the Committee of a recommendation for the Council to consider changing the names of Bethnal Green, St Peters & Canary Wharf, the recommendation made during the consultation for the Polling District and Polling Places review determined by Full Council on 15 January 2020.

Recommendations:

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to either:

1. Acknowledge the recommendation but not to undertake a review.
2. Act on the recommendation and formally agree for a review to be undertaken which would then be for Full Council to determine.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

1.1. To ensure compliance with statutory process.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.1 None.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

3.1 Polling Districts and Polling Places Review

On the 15 January 2020 the Council was, following the review of Polling Districts and Places, asked to determine recommendations from consultees who proposed amendments to the existing polling places and polling districts.

The report detailed several small amendments but contained within one of the consultation responses, from the Local Campaigns Forum of the Labour Party, a recommendation that the Council initiate the required steps set out in Section 59 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to amend three ward names, namely:

- changing Bethnal Green Ward to Bethnal Green East
- changing Canary Wharf Ward to Millwall and
- changing St. Peter's Ward to Bethnal Green West

It is considered that the recommendation does not empower the Council to undergo the required process because it was not considered to be a formal request to do so. However, it is considered appropriate that the recommendation is brought to the attention of the committee to decide if this should be acted on and a formal review instigated.

3.2 Process

Under Section 59 of the Local Government & Housing Act 2007, a local authority may change the name of any of its electoral areas. If the area's name is protected, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) must first agree to the proposed change.

An electoral area is "protected" if

(a) The name was given to the electoral area by or in pursuance of an order under section 17 of the Local Government Act 1992 or section 14 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, and

(b) That order was made during the period of five years ending with the day on which a resolution to change the name is to be passed.

As the Council's ward names were considered at the time of the Periodic Electoral Review in 2013 and instigated in 2014 i.e. more than 5 years ago, the names of the current Wards are not protected and can be changed by resolution of the Council.

The resolution to change the name of an electoral area must be passed at a meeting which is specially convened for the purpose of deciding the resolution with notice of the object and by a majority of at least two thirds of the meeting.

The local authority must not pass the resolution unless it has taken reasonable steps to consult such persons it considers appropriate on the proposed name. The change of name does not take effect until the LG BCE has been given notice of the change.

As soon as practicable after a resolution is passed, the local authority must give notice of the change of name to all of the following -

- (a) The Electoral Commission
- (b) The Boundary Commission for England
- (c) The Office of National Statistics
- (d) The Director General of the Ordnance Survey.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 There are no direct financial considerations arising from this report.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The Recommendations of the Report seeks Members' approval to either acknowledge to undertake a review of the proposal or alternatively formally agree for a review to be undertaken and for the determination to be subsequently undertaken by Full Council in due course.
- 5.2 Paragraph 3.1 of Report states that officers do not consider the proposal to be a valid formal request which triggers the commencement of the review process but have brought the status of the request to the General Purposes Committee to determine as part of the Recommendation.
- 5.3 Paragraph 3.2 of the Report advises that the names of the current electoral areas are not protected and can be changed by resolution of Full Council. Members' will note the statutory criteria to be adhered to if Full Council were minded to determine and approve the proposed electoral name changes in accordance with S59 LGPIA 2007.
- 5.4 The local authority must not pass the resolution unless it has taken reasonable steps to consult. Further, upon making an order, notice must be provided to a number of statutory consultees as set out in paragraph 3.2 above .

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 There are no equalities or diversity implications arising from this report

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no implications arising from this report

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

8.1 There are no SAGE implications arising from this report.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

Appendix A: Submission of the Local Campaigns Forum of the Labour Party

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended) list of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

- Robert Curtis, Head of Electoral Services