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SUBMISSION TO THE POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2019 FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This submission is being made by the Local Campaigns Forum of the Labour Party in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 1.2 It is a response to the consultation published by the .In this submission we comment on the polling district boundaries and polling places as well as the names of three wards.

2. POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

2.1 *Blackwall & Cubitt Town (BC)*

3. No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

However, the rapid development of London City Island and Goodluck Hope and the consequent expansion in population will require the council to keep this area under review.

3.1 *Bow East (BE)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places. However, the rapid development of Fish Island and the consequent expansion in population will require the council to keep this area under review.

3.2 *Bethnal Green (BG)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.3 *Bromley North (BN)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.4 *Bromley South (BS)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.5 *Bow West (BW)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.6 *Canary Wharf (CW)*

The boundaries of the polling districts in Canary Wharf ward, as currently configured, do not respect the natural communities in the ward, including the Barkentine Estate and the communities along the riverside and Millwall Outer Dock.

Additionally, the continued use of the Museum of London in Docklands as a polling place remains deeply unsatisfactory, located as it is a long way from the main concentration of population in the polling district it serves in a building that will not be familiar to many local residents.

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Additionally, concerns have been raised for sometimes about the suitability of the Docklands Community Association premises as a venue for a polling place.

Accordingly two new polling places have been proposed:

- A Portakabin near the Tesco Express on Westferry Road/Cuba Street
- Seven Mills Primary School

The proposed new boundaries and polling places can be seen in the map of Canary Wharf ward in the appendix to this submission.

3.7 *Island Gardens (IG)*

A single simple amendment to the boundary between IG1 and IG2 is proposed.

Currently the polling district boundary runs down the centre of Britannia Road, splitting Cutlers Square and the north side of Britannia Road (IG1) from Vulcan Square and the south side of Britannia Road (IG2), despite both being part of the same development and only accessible from Britannia Road.

The proposed change would see the boundary of IG1 extended to the south to incorporate this whole development.

The proposed new boundary can be seen in the map of Island Gardens ward in the appendix to this submission.

3.8 *Lansbury (LA)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.9 *Limehouse (LI)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.10 *Mile End (ME)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.11 *Poplar (PO)*

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.12 *Spitalfields & Banglatown (SB)*

The boundaries of the polling districts in Spitalfields and Banglatown ward have long failed to respect either the natural communities in the ward or the impact of major roads, not least Commercial Street.

The proposed reconfiguration of polling districts better reflects the geography of the ward and will assist electors in identifying and accessing their polling places.

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Two new polling places are recommended, replacing Christchurch Primary School and Cannon Barnett Primary School. The new recommended venues are either the Holland Community Centre or Toynbee Hall (for SB1) and the Brady Centre (for SB3).

As well as being well known and accessible community facilities, the use of these buildings will also prevent the need to close two primary schools on polling days.

The proposed new boundaries and polling places can be seen in the map of Spitalfields and Banglatown ward in the appendix to this submission.

3.13 St. Dunstan's (SD)

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.14 Stepney Green (SG)

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.15 Shadwell (SH)

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.16 St. Katharine's & Wapping (SK)

The boundaries of the polling districts in St. Katharine's & Wapping ward, as currently configured, do not respect the natural communities in the ward, including long established estates and the community around Wapping Wall and Shadwell Basin and King Edward VII Memorial Park.

The proposed reconfigured polling districts much more accurately reflect these communities and the rapidly increasing population in the north or the ward.

The proposed new boundaries can be seen in the map of St. Katharine's and Wapping ward in the appendix to this submission.

The rapid development of London Docks and the consequent expansion in population will require the council to keep this area under review.

3.17 St. Peter's (SP)

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.18 Weavers (WE)

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

3.19 Whitechapel (WH)

No proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

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3. WARD NAMES

- 3.1 In its submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in January 2013, Tower Hamlets Labour Party argued for changes to a number of the then proposed wards names.
- 3.2 Specifically, in relation to St Peter's and Bethnal Green, we expressed the view is that although the name St Peter's has some historic resonance having previously been a ward name, it did not reflect residents' current sense of the area. We therefore proposed that St Peter's be instead called Bethnal Green West and Bethnal Green ward be called Bethnal Green East.
- 3.3 We believe that our concerns have been proved to have had good grounds. An example of the problems caused include the councillors for Bethnal Green Ward routinely receiving large volumes of casework for residents of St. Peter's, residents of St. Peter's not unreasonably believing that they live in Bethnal Green.
- 3.4 Additionally, strong representations were made about the naming of Canary Wharf Ward. This ward is bounded by the historic Millwall, by Millwall Inner Dock and Millwall Outer Dock.
- 3.5 The LGBCE eventually determined to name the ward Canary Wharf, despite this name being closely linked to the non-residential area of the ward and most closely associated with Canary Wharf Group, a commercial entity. Indeed, an objection was made by Canary Wharf Group PLC about 'Canary Wharf' being used as a ward name. Their objection was on the basis that it is their trading name and that the ward did also not include the entire Canary Wharf estate.
- 3.6 Section 59 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides a power under which the local authority may decide whether or not to change the names of wards within its area. It specifies the steps that must be taken in order to change the name, including taking all reasonable steps to consult with the affected residents and a resolution, which must be passed by a majority of at least two thirds of councillors voting at a specially convened council meeting.
- 3.7 We therefore recommend 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***.