


Non-Executive Report of the: Council 17 November 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of Janet Fasan, Divisional Director Legal Services, and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Proposed changes to Borough Ward Names	

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

Summary

This report informs Council of the responses to the proposals to change the ward names of Bethnal Green Ward, St Peters Ward & Canary Wharf Ward.

A recommendation to change the names was made during the consultation for the Polling District and Polling Places review agreed at Council on 15 January 2020 and the subsequent consultation agreed by General Purposes Committee on the 6 October 2020.

The consultation took place between 22nd November 2020 and 2nd February 2021 and was reported to General Purposes Committee for their observations on 24 June 2021.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

Note the results of the consultation and to decide whether to amend the names of the Borough Wards as recommended or not.

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

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 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.
- 3.2 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 Ward
 - changing Canary Wharf Ward to Millwall Ward and
 - changing St. Peter's Ward to Bethnal Green West Ward
- 3.3 The council could not undertake the required process at that time because the recommendation was not considered to be a formal request to change the names. However, it was considered appropriate that the recommendation be brought to the attention of the GPC on the 6 October 2020 to decide if this should be acted on and a formal review instigated.

4 Process

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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 LGBCE has been given notice of the change.

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

4.5 On 6 October 2020 GPC considered the recommendation and decided that the changes proposed be subject to consultation and this was passed to the Councils Strategy, Policy & Performance Division within the Governance Directorate to undertake.

5. Consultation

5.1 A consultation/survey was carried out on the council's consultation hub, Let's Talk Tower Hamlets, was promoted on the council's website, Our East End and via social media channels.

5.2 22,000 emails were also sent to electors in the three directly affected wards directing them to the portal where the survey and information was held.

5.3 The survey took place between 22nd November 2020 and 2nd February 2021.

5.4 The survey comprised of a questionnaire with three questions for each of the three proposed ward name changes being consulted on:

1. Would you like to respond to the suggestion to change the name of x ward? Yes/No
2. We have received a suggestion to change the name of x ward to y.
3. Do you want to make any other comments on the suggestions to change the name of the ward?

5.5 The open-ended questions in the consultation questionnaire were coded into themes to allow the responses to be quantified. This encompassed reading every response and the creation of a code frame of key themes.

5.6 The results of the survey are detailed in the power point presentation provided in Appendix A and a summary provided in Appendix C.

5.7 Responses were also received from Cllr Golds and Cllr A Wood and these are attached at Appendix B but were not considered in the formal survey data because the comments were not received through the approved survey portal but have been added to this report.

5.8 On 24th June 2021 the results of the survey were presented to GPC who, as part of the consultation, have recommended the following

- that the proposed name changes for Bethnal Green Ward and St Peters Wards to Bethnal Green East Ward and Bethnal Green West Ward respectively be referred to Council for consideration.
- that the proposed name change for Canary Wharf Ward to Millwall Ward is not progressed.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report.

7. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

7.2 There are no other implications arising from this report.

8. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. LEGAL COMMENTS

9.1 The legal implications are set out in the report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

Appendix A: Consultation results (Power Point)

Appendix B: Submission of Cllr A Wood and Cllr Peter Golds)

Appendix C: Summary of results

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