

# Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	6
Council size	6
Electoral fairness	8
General analysis	8
Electoral arrangements	10
Tower Hamlets South	10
Tower Hamlets Central East	14
Tower Hamlets Central West	17
Tower Hamlets North	20
Conclusions	25
3 What happens next?	27
4 Mapping	29
Appendices	
A Table A1: Final recommendations for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets	31
B Glossary and abbreviations	35



# Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in 2012.

This review was conducted as follows:

<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
27 March 2012	Consultation on council size
20 June 2012	Submission of proposals of ward patterns to the LGBCE
12 September 2012	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
13 November 2012	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
8 January 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 45 members comprising two single-member wards, 11 two-member wards and seven three-member wards. During the consultation period on warding patterns for Tower Hamlets, we received 15 submissions, including borough-wide proposals from the Mayor, the Labour Group and the Conservative Group.

Having considered all the submissions received, we considered that all three of the borough-wide submissions provided good electoral equality, broadly used clear boundaries, and included evidence of community identity. Consequently, we broadly based our draft recommendations on the proposals of all three borough-wide schemes, subject to modifications in some areas to provide clearer boundaries and reflect evidence of community identity received from other local interests.

## Submissions received

We received 110 submissions in response to our consultation on draft recommendations. We received a Full Council motion, as well as submissions from the Mayor (who submitted three representations), the Labour Group, the Conservative Group, 15 borough councillors, Rushanara Ali MP, five petitions, 10 local organisations and 73 local residents. All submissions can be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

# Analysis and final recommendations

## Electorate figures

As part of this review, the Council worked with the Commission to submit electorate forecasts for 2018, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2013. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 16% between 2012 and 2018. This is clearly a large increase. However, having considered the evidence provided by the Council regarding developments, the methodology used, and having seen evidence of large-scale developments on the ground in the borough, we are of the view that these projections are the best available at the present time. These figures form the basis of the final recommendations.

## General analysis

We have considered all submissions received during the consultation on our draft recommendations and, where possible, have sought to reflect the evidence received in these final recommendations. We have proposed three minor modifications to ward boundaries in Limehouse, Bow, and Blackwall & Cubitt Town. We have also proposed several changes to the names of wards throughout the borough. Elsewhere, we have confirmed our draft recommendations as final.

Our final recommendations for Tower Hamlets are that the Council should have 45 members representing two single-member, 11 two-member and seven three-member wards. Under our final recommendations, none of the proposed wards will have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2018. Having taken into account the evidence we have received during consultation, we believe that our final recommendations will ensure good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and providing for effective and convenient local government.

## What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Tower Hamlets Council. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in 2014.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views. The full report is available to download at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

**You can also view our final recommendations for Tower Hamlets Council on our interactive maps at [consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk)**

# 1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Tower Hamlets Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during this consultation period informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets*, which were published on 13 November 2012. Consultation on our draft recommendations took place until 8 January 2013.

## What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation<sup>1</sup> and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why are we conducting a review in Tower Hamlets?

5 Based on December 2011 electorate data, 35% of the borough's wards currently have a variance of more than 10%. Of these, one ward – Millwall – has an electoral variance of 47%.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

6 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change as a result of our recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
Sir Tony Redmond  
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill  
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

## 2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

9 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Tower Hamlets is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,<sup>2</sup> with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
  - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

10 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

11 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

12 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries and we are not therefore able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

### Submissions received

13 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (‘the Council’) and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 110 submissions during the consultation period on our draft recommendations. All submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

14 We take the evidence received during consultation very seriously and the submissions were carefully considered before we formulated our final

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

recommendations. Officers from the Commission have been assisted by officers at the Council who have provided relevant information throughout the review.

15 As we did at the previous stage, we would like record our thanks to the Mayor, all members, and officers of the Council for the constructive way in which they have engaged with the electoral review process and for the detailed and high-quality representations they have submitted at all stages of the review.

## Electorate figures

16 At the start of the review, we requested electorate forecasts for 2018, broken down to polling district level. The Council, at that stage, did not provide us with data to the level of detail required. However, Council officers did provide a significant amount of developmental data. We then applied a methodology to this data which broke down the information to polling district level. These were checked with officers at the Council and subsequently updated to reflect new population data before being published on our website at the start of the consultation period on warding patterns.

17 During this consultation period, a number of Tower Hamlets councillors expressed concern about the electorate forecasts. Officers at the Commission subsequently met with the leaders of the groups, as well as with officers of the Council, to discuss the concerns. We then worked with the Council to provide updated electorate forecasts at polling district level. The Council subsequently provided us with electorate figures across the borough and accompanied this data with information regarding developments planned to 2018. This information detailed developments to street level to ensure accuracy.

18 The electorate forecasts project an increase of 16% between 2012 and 2018. This is clearly a large increase. However, having considered the evidence provided by the Council regarding developments, the methodology used, and having seen evidence of large-scale developments on the ground in the borough, we are of the view that these projections are the best available at the present time. These figures form the basis of the final recommendations.

## Council size

19 Preliminary discussions with the Council began in October 2011. During the preliminary stage, we sought views on council size from the Mayor and political groups on the Council.

20 Subsequently, we received six submissions advocating four different council sizes, which varied from the existing council size of 51 to a significantly smaller council size of 38. The Labour Group and two Labour councillors supported retaining the existing council size of 51. The Mayor, a cabinet member and five Labour councillors proposed a reduction of six councillors to 45. The Conservative Group proposed a reduction of nine councillors to 42. A Liberal Democrat councillor proposed a reduction of 13 members to 38.

21 At our March 2012 meeting, we considered the evidence we had received on council size. We concluded that the evidence we had received justified a relatively modest reduction in the number of councillors and determined to consult on a council size of 45 members. This consultation ended on 8 May 2012.



22 We received 23 submissions during the consultation on council size. These were from the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, five local councillors, a residents' association, and 13 local residents, one of whom submitted two representations. No further submission was received from the Mayor.

23 We carefully considered the information provided during the consultation period. A number of residents supported a reduction in council size to 45 members, although they provided only limited evidence regarding the Council's management structures and representative roles. However, with the exception of the Labour Group, it was clear that there was a broad political consensus in favour of some reduction in council size.

24 We considered that the evidence received during the preliminary period and consultation justified a reduction in council size. While we noted the arguments regarding committee structures and workload made by the Conservative Group, we were concerned that a council size of 42 would leave only two non-executive councillors who would not be on one of the scrutiny panels or the main Overview & Scrutiny committee. In light of the need to allow for unplanned absence – especially given the heavy representational role described by the Labour Group in each of its submissions – and to provide for a measure of flexibility for members, it was our view that a reduction to 42 members could potentially impact on the Council's ability to discharge its functions effectively.

25 Given the recent establishment of a directly elected Mayor and the evidence provided to date, we considered that a council size of 45 would take account of the new executive arrangements, while not having a detrimental effect on elected members' ability to effectively scrutinise the decisions of the authority or effectively represent their constituents.

26 We were therefore minded to adopt a council size of 45 elected members as the basis of this electoral review. A consultation on warding arrangements began on 20 June 2012 and ended on 11 September 2012.

27 During this period, we received five representations relating to council size. The Mayor reiterated his support for a council size of 45. Limehouse Community Forum also stated that they were in support of a council size of 45. However, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, a local resident and a local organisation – the Community Network – argued against a reduction in councillors. The submissions argued that the increase in population placed a greater workload on councillors. However, we were of the view that these submissions were not supported by evidence relating to the management and governance structures of the Council. Having considered all the evidence received relating to council size, we decided to adopt a council size of 45 as part of our draft recommendations.

28 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received nine submissions related to council size, including a motion passed by the Council. Four submissions, including the council motion, argued that the existing council size of 51 should be retained. Both the Labour Group and Community Network – who also submitted a petition of 1,352 signatures in support of their view – argued that the increase in electorate forecast for the coming years would significantly increase the workload demands for councillors. The Community Network also argued that the decrease in council size 'will have a detrimental impact on the quality of service accessible to residents living in Tower Hamlets'.

29 We also received five submissions in support of our proposed council size. Councillor Eaton and Councillor Bagshaw both argued that the ‘change to an elected Mayor... has changed the role of councillors, who no longer have executive control over the majority of council decisions’. The Conservative Group echoed this argument and argued that since ‘executive power had been transferred from the councillors to the Executive Mayor, a reduction in the size of the council was possible and desirable’. A local resident also expressed their support for a council size of 45.

30 Having considered the evidence provided, we are of the view that the arguments made in support of a council size of 51 have been considered at earlier stages of the review, and that there has been support from across the borough – both during this consultation stage and previously – for a council size of 45. We have therefore confirmed a council size of 45 for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets as final.

## Electoral fairness

31 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

32 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we calculate the average number of electors per councillor. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (171,598 in 2012 and 198,777 by 2018) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council – 45 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 3,813 in 2012 and 4,417 by 2018.

33 Under our final recommendations, none of our proposed wards will have an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for the borough by 2018. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our final recommendations for Tower Hamlets.

## General analysis

34 Prior to formulating our draft recommendations, we received 15 submissions, including detailed borough-wide proposals from the Mayor, the Labour Group and the Conservative Group. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for council size or warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

35 The schemes received during the consultation on warding patterns provided competing warding arrangements for each part of the borough. The submissions provided by the Mayor and the Labour Group proposed mixed warding patterns of two- and three-member wards. The Conservative Group proposed a mixed warding pattern of single-, two- and three-member wards.

36 Having carefully considered the proposals received, we were of the view that all three of the borough-wide submissions provided good electoral equality, broadly used clear boundaries and included evidence of community identity. Consequently,

we broadly based our draft recommendations on the proposals of all three borough-wide schemes, subject to modifications in some areas to provide clearer boundaries and reflect evidence of community identity received from other local interests.

37 Our draft recommendations were for two single-member wards, 11 two-member wards, and seven three-member wards. We considered that our draft proposals provided for good levels of electoral equality, used clear boundaries and reflected our understanding of community identities and interests in Tower Hamlets.

38 Following publication of our draft recommendations, 110 submissions were received. We received a Full Council motion, as well as submissions from the Mayor (who submitted three representations), the Labour Group, the Conservative Group, 15 borough councillors, Rushanara Ali MP, five petitions, 10 local organisations and 73 local residents.

39 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received comments from the Labour Group opposing the principle of single-member wards. The Group argued that there were 'occasions where a councillor is not available to the electorate due to illness, holidays or work commitments', that there would be clashes with meetings, and that some members of the electorate 'would, for various reasons, prefer to see one councillor than another'. However, for local authorities which elect by all-out elections, as Tower Hamlets does, there is no presumption in favour of single-, two- or three-member wards. Our task is to balance the evidence we receive as it relates to the statutory criteria set out above (paragraph 9). In the case of the draft recommendations for Tower Hamlets, we were of the view that the balance of evidence supported single-member wards in Limehouse and Poplar South.

40 We have considered all submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. In our final recommendations for Tower Hamlets, we have sought to address evidence received during consultation and achieve good levels of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests. We have decided to include three minor modifications to ward boundaries and seven changes to ward names in our final recommendations.

41 Our final recommendations are for two single-member wards, 11 two-member wards and seven three-member wards. A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 31–2) and Map 1.

42 Our final proposals result in a number of wards with electoral variances greater than 10% from the borough average in 2012. This is due to the significant development planned for the borough between 2012 and 2018, particularly in the areas of Bromley-by-Bow and on the Isle of Dogs. Each of our proposed wards is forecast to improve to within 10% of the borough average by 2018.

## Electoral arrangements

43 This section of the report details the submissions we have received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Tower Hamlets. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- Tower Hamlets South (pages 10–14)
- Tower Hamlets Central East (pages 14–17)
- Tower Hamlets Central West (pages 17–20)
- Tower Hamlets North (pages 20–4)

44 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 31–2 and illustrated on Map 1 accompanying this report.

### Tower Hamlets South

45 Tower Hamlets South is a densely populated area comprising the areas of the Isle of Dogs and Limehouse.

46 Our draft recommendations for Tower Hamlets South were generally based on proposals submitted by the Conservative Group, subject to some modifications to provide for stronger boundaries and reflect evidence of local communities. Our draft recommendations were for a single-member Limehouse ward, two-member Millwall and West India wards, and a three-member Blackwall & Cubitt Town ward. Under our draft recommendations, no ward was projected to have a variance greater than 10% from the borough average by 2018.

#### **The Isle of Dogs and Limehouse**

##### *Millwall South/Island Gardens*

47 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received nine submissions which commented on our proposals for this area. These were from the Conservative Group, the Mayor, five councillors, and two local residents. The Mayor expressed general support for the arrangements, stating that he was ‘confident’ that they were ‘sensible and representative reflections’ of local communities.

48 The Conservative Group, five councillors and a local resident proposed identical modifications to the boundary between our proposed Millwall and Blackwall & Cubitt Town wards. Each submission argued that our proposed boundary along Seyssel Street divided the Manchester Estate and Betty May Gray House from the Kingsfield Estate. The local resident argued that this area was ‘very much one ‘community’’. The Conservative Group and three local councillors stated that these developments were run by the same housing association. Councillor Archer added that the ‘estates are subject to ongoing regeneration work’, shared facilities, and would be better served by shared representation. Each of the representations proposed that the boundary should be moved north to Pier Street to ensure the whole area was included within our proposed Millwall ward.

49 Having considered the evidence provided, we accept that the north-eastern boundary of our proposed Millwall ward divided a cohesive community. We agree that community identity in the area would be better reflected by a boundary which runs along Pier Street and note that this adjustment would not have a significantly adverse impact upon electoral equality in the area. We have therefore decided to

modify the north-eastern boundary so that it runs north along Pier Street, which would incorporate both the Betty May Gray House and the Manchester Estate in a ward to the south. This ward would have 7% more electors than the borough average by 2018.

50 We also received opposition to the name of our proposed Millwall ward. The Conservative Group, four councillors, and two local residents proposed that the ward should instead be named Island Gardens. The Conservative Group stated that 'residents' understanding of the sense of place is that Millwall refers to the western side of the Island, while Cubitt Town is the eastern side'. This view was echoed by Councillors Aston, Davis and Archer, who argued that the name Millwall did not accurately reflect the area included within the ward. A local resident argued that "Island Gardens' is more frequently used by local residents to describe their address, and the DLR station and Island Gardens are focal points in the area'.

51 Having considered the evidence, we are of the view that the name Millwall does not reflect the local community. We have therefore decided to adopt the name Island Gardens as part of our final recommendations.

### *Limehouse*

52 Our draft proposal for Limehouse was for a single-member ward bounded by West India Dock Road/Westferry Road to the east, Commercial Road to the north, and the Rotherhithe Tunnel to the west. The proposed ward generated considerable comment from a variety of local interests. We received 13 submissions which commented on our proposals for this area. These were from the Mayor, the Labour Group, the Conservative Group, three councillors (two of which made two submissions), a local organisation, and four local residents. The Mayor expressed general support for our draft proposals in this area, noting that they 'alleviated the issues' within the existing arrangements.

53 Opposition to the proposed Limehouse ward was expressed by the Labour Group, two local residents, and Locksley Tenants & Residents' Association. The Labour Group argued that the proposed ward did 'not cover the full extent of the area recognised by local residents as Limehouse'. The Group stated that the 'heart of the area recognised as Limehouse is a set of facilities used by residents to the north and south of Commercial Road, both sides of the southern end of Burdett Road and along West and East India Dock Roads'. This view was echoed by two local residents and Locksley Tenants & Residents' Association, all of which argued that the Locksley Estate was considered part of Limehouse. The Residents' Association added that Commercial Road, rather than being a strong boundary, was the centre of 'not only an historical community but an existing community that would be undermined' by the proposed ward. Respondents cited a local post office, churches, health practices and schools as examples of shared facilities.

54 To reflect these links between the areas, the Labour Group argued that the proposed Limehouse ward should be extended north and east to form a two-member ward. To the north, the Labour Group proposed that the ward include the Locksley estate, north of Commercial Road, which is bounded to the north by the railway line, to the west by the Regent's Canal, and to the east by Burdett Road. To the east, the Labour Group proposed that the ward extend across West India Dock Road as far as Ming Street. This would result in part of our proposed Poplar South ward being included in a two-member Limehouse ward. No evidence of community identity was

provided to support the proposed eastern extension across West India Road. No rationale was provided to explain why Ming Street should form the eastern boundary.

55 We also received strong support for the proposed Limehouse ward from the Conservative Group and three local councillors, subject to a minor modification to the western boundary (paragraph 56). Councillor Aston argued that there was not 'a very strong affinity' between the areas either side of West India Dock Road and cited the different facilities – schools, shopping centres, health practices, and travel points – used by two distinct communities which had 'little in common' and were 'divided by a main road'. In a joint submission, Councillors Jones and Aston repeated these differences and refuted the Labour Group's assertions regarding shared services across Commercial Road. The councillors further argued that to use Ming Street as a boundary would 'divide communities from one another' and did not represent a strong boundary. The Conservative Group stated that it welcomed the proposed Limehouse ward which was 'coterminous with the Limehouse Community Forum's area' and therefore 'naturally represent[ed] a community of interest'. Councillor Golds argued that the proposed Limehouse ward had 'very identifiable boundaries' and 'identifiable community links, based around Narrow Street... and with Commercial Road as a clear and identifiable northern boundary'.

56 A minor modification to the proposed Limehouse ward was proposed by the Conservative Group, Councillor Aston, Councillor Golds, and two local residents. These submissions proposed that the western boundary of the Limehouse ward should be moved slightly west so that Keeper Wharf would be included in the ward. Under the draft proposal, we had included Keeper Wharf in our proposed St Katharine's & Wapping ward. Both local residents stated that there was 'no through access' from Keeper Wharf to the remainder of the proposed St Katharine's & Wapping ward 'other than via a Thames Path'. The residents argued that Keeper Wharf should therefore be included in the proposed Limehouse ward.

57 Having carefully considered the representations, we acknowledge that evidence has been provided by local interests to link the areas north and south of Commercial Road. However, while the proposal of the Labour Group to unite these areas within a two-member ward provides for good electoral equality, its eastward extension into Poplar South crosses the very strong boundary of West India Road. We also consider that Ming Street, in comparison, does not provide for an equally strong boundary and, in our view, arbitrarily splits a cohesive community in Poplar South for which strong evidence has been provided (paragraph 68). A two-member ward which only combined the proposed Limehouse ward with the Locksley Estate would have 18% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018. In our view, this is an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality.

58 We have therefore decided to confirm our proposal for a single-member Limehouse ward as final. However, we acknowledge that the draft proposal separated Keeper Wharf from the rest of the properties along Narrow Street and did not allow its residents access into St Katharine's & Wapping. We therefore propose to slightly modify the western boundary of our single-member Limehouse ward so that it runs along the western edge of Keeper Wharf. Under our final recommendations, this ward would have 1% more electors than the borough average by 2018.

### *Canary Wharf and Blackwall & Cubitt Town*

59 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 10 submissions which commented on our proposals for this area. These were from the Conservative Group, the Mayor, five councillors, and three local residents.

60 Other than the proposed minor modification to the southern boundary of Blackwall & Cubitt Town (discussed in paragraphs 48–9), we received no opposition to the proposed boundaries of our proposed West India and Blackwall & Cubitt Town wards. Councillor Davis noted that it was ‘suitable to retain the north–south boundary along the Millwall Inner Dock since there are no strong links from the west side of the dock... to the east side of the dock.’ She added that, ‘aside from Marsh Wall, the only link is the Pepper Street footbridge’. The Conservative Group argued that the proposed wards reflected local communities: ‘Primary schoolchildren in the east and west attend different schools; there are different GPs’ surgeries on the west and east of the island; there are distinct shopping parades at the Barkantine Estate and on Manchester Road.’

61 As a consequence of the support shown for these wards during consultation, we confirm the boundaries of the two-member West India and three-member Blackwall & Cubitt Town wards as final, subject to the modification to the southern boundary of Blackwall & Cubitt Town already outlined above (paragraph 49). Under our final recommendations, these wards would have 3% more and 3% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

62 We did, however, receive significant opposition to the name of our proposed West India ward. The Conservative Group argued that the historical association of the area with West India Docks – our justification for naming the ward West India – ‘may once have been appropriate but is not so any longer, particularly since the docks closed in 1980 and Canary Wharf has been built in its place’. Councillor Golds argued that the name was ‘not one that would ever be used locally or by residents’. Councillor Davis argued that while the proposed ward did ‘contain West India Quay, this name reflects the area from the West India Quay DLR station to Hertsmere Road in the west... it would be extremely misleading to think that the whole of the proposed ward would identify with this name’. Councillor Aston argued that ‘West India has never been the name of a ward in Tower Hamlets before and in no way is the name in use by local residents’.

63 Alternative ward names were therefore proposed. Councillor Golds argued that ‘Canary Wharf remains the obvious choice of name’ but also suggested that the name Westferry ‘would be an alternative indication of community identification as Westferry Road is the main link road of the proposed ward’. Councillor Aston suggested the name Millwall, arguing that ‘the area north of Millwall Outer Dock and west of Millwall Inner Dock is the area most commonly known as Millwall by local residents’. Councillor Davis and the Conservative Group argued that the ward should be named Canary Wharf. The Group argued that ‘the local area is becoming known as Canary Wharf because of the dominance of the financial centre... we feel it would be much more appropriate to represent the modern rather than the historical associations of the area by renaming the proposed West India ward as Canary Wharf’. Councillor Davis added that Canary Wharf was the ‘defining landmark’ of the area.

64 Having considered the evidence provided, we acknowledge that the name West India does not reflect the local community. We agree that the modern associations of

the area with Canary Wharf are significant and that Canary Wharf is likely to be considered to be the defining landmark of the ward. We have therefore decided to adopt the name Canary Wharf as part of our final recommendations.

## Tower Hamlets Central East

65 Tower Hamlets Central East is a densely populated urban area comprising the areas of Poplar, East India, Lansbury, Mile End and Bromley-by-Bow.

66 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the proposals of Councillor Aston, subject to some modifications to provide for stronger boundaries and improved electoral equality. Our draft recommendations were for a single-member Poplar South ward, two-member Bromley North and Bromley South wards, and three-member Poplar North and Mile End wards. Under our draft recommendations, no ward was projected to have a variance greater than 10% from the borough average by 2018.

### **Poplar, Mile End and Bromley**

#### *Poplar and East India*

67 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 11 submissions which commented on our proposals for this area. These were from the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, the Mayor, six councillors, and two local residents.

68 We received strong support for our single-member Poplar South ward. A local resident argued that the ward was 'clearly based around the community around Poplar High Street – a very strong community'. The resident added that there was 'great community cohesion around the Poplar Mosque on Hale Street' and the proposed ward had 'very strong boundaries'. The Conservative Group argued that the proposed ward 'represents an area of strong community interest and is bounded by very strong boundaries which make communications with other parts of the borough difficult and which consequently have not allowed the building of community affinities with other areas'. Councillor Golds stated that the ward had 'strong community links and is clearly identifiable'.

69 As a consequence of its proposals for a revised Limehouse ward, the Labour Group proposed a modification to Poplar South involving the western boundary running along Ming Street. For reasons already set out above (paragraphs 53–8), we did not consider this modification reflected community interests or provided a strong boundary. We therefore confirm the boundaries of our proposed single-member Poplar South ward as final. This ward would have 10% more electors than the borough average by 2018.

70 We also received support for the boundaries of our proposed Poplar North ward. We received representations from the Conservative Group and Councillor Aston regarding the proposed western boundary of the ward. Councillor Aston noted that, while he would have 'preferred more of the Lansbury Estate to have been included in the Poplar North ward', the warding arrangement had the effect of transferring only the Festival Quarter and Arcadia Street into Poplar North and was 'in fact a very good boundary'. The Conservative Group noted that the arrangement 'provided for a recognisable boundary' and that 'any other boundary would divide the Lansbury Estate west of Upper North Street'. Councillor Golds stated that 'the Commission's proposals provide for excellent and identifiable representation'.



71 We therefore confirm the boundaries of our proposed Poplar North ward as final. This ward would have 9% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018.

72 We did, however, receive opposition to the name of the proposed Poplar North ward. A petition of 99 residents, sent in by the Mayor, protested ‘the proposal to drop the name ‘Lansbury’ from East India and Lansbury ward’. The Mayor, in his own submission, argued that ‘the inclusion of ‘Lansbury’ has important historical and cultural significance’. He argued that the Lansbury estate, which comprises the majority of the ward and is home to hundreds of residents, was ‘a dominant local landmark’ with which residents of the area identified. He proposed the name Poplar North & Lansbury, or simply Lansbury, for the ward. Councillors Bagshaw and Eaton argued that ‘Lansbury’s energy, tenacity, principles and sheer political nerve should be remembered in the area where he served’ and also proposed the ward name of Lansbury. The Labour Group argued that George Lansbury was ‘one of the great political figures of the East End’ and ‘should continue to be reflected in the name of one the Tower Hamlets wards’. The Group proposed the name Poplar North & Lansbury. We also received a submission from a local resident which argued that George Lansbury was ‘an East End icon fighting for people’s housing and jobs’ and that Lansbury should be retained in the ward name.

73 The Conservative Group, Councillor Aston and Councillor Golds supported the ward name Poplar North. The Conservative Group argued that ‘perhaps the strongest justification is that there is not and never has been an Attlee ward for the borough, despite Clement Attlee being former Mayor of Stepney... and, of course, Prime Minister’. Councillor Golds argued that George Lansbury was ‘legendary for his personal modesty. His great pride was service to the people of Poplar and he would certainly have considered this area as Poplar’. Councillor Aston noted that the Lansbury name, currently being used as part of the East India & Lansbury ward, ‘confuses residents on the Lansbury Estate’ in the existing Limehouse ward ‘who think they are in the East India & Lansbury ward’.

74 Having considered the evidence presented to us, we acknowledge that there is clearly strong local support for including the name ‘Lansbury’ within the ward name. While we have received support for the proposed ward name of Poplar North, we are of the view that, on balance, the name Lansbury would better reflect the views of the local community and the area comprising the ward. We have therefore decided to adopt the name Lansbury as part of our final recommendations. As a consequence, we have also decided to adopt the name Poplar in place of Poplar South.

#### *Bromley-by-Bow and Mile End*

75 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 13 submissions which commented on our proposals in this area. These were from the Mayor, the Labour Group, the Conservative Group, four councillors, four local organisations and two local residents.

76 As discussed in paragraphs 53–8, we received opposition to the southern boundary of our proposed Mile End ward. The Labour Group, two local residents, and Locksley Tenants & Residents’ Association argued that the Locksley Estate was considered part of Limehouse and should be included in a two-member Limehouse ward, rather than in the proposed Mile End ward. However, for reasons set out above in paragraphs 53–8, we were not persuaded to amend the southern boundary of our proposed Mile End ward.

77 We also received opposition to our proposed Bromley North and Mile End wards. Under our draft recommendations, we proposed that the western boundary of the Bromley North ward should run along the western edge of the St Clements Hospital site. This proposal placed the British Estate in the Bromley North ward. The Labour Group, Mile End Residents' Association, East London Community Land Trust, and Eastend Homes opposed this arrangement.

78 The residents' association stated that the British Street Estate was 'part of the East End Homes administrative area known as Mile End East and is run from a single estate office along with the Brokesley, Eric & Treby and Bede estates to the west'. The association argued that 'the exclusion of the British Street Estate from any ward area around Mile End would be detrimental to the work carried out so far by residents and local police and break relationships'. This view was echoed by Eastend Homes and the Labour Group, both of which argued that these estates were known locally as 'the Mile End East estates' and which 'form a natural community'. Eastend Homes and the Labour Group argued that the existing north-eastern boundary of Mile End East ward – the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) located south of Mile End Road – should be retained as a boundary. East London Community Land Trust argued that the estates in the areas 'feel united by a certain sense of place'. The Trust argued that the draft proposals 'clearly segregate, both in name and in representation, many of these commonly united interests'. The Trust added that 'few – if any – residents east of the Docklands Light Railway line feel like they live in 'Bromley North''.

79 We also received some limited support for our proposals for this area. The Conservative Group stated that they 'welcomed the adoption of these wards' which used 'strong boundaries in the A11 and the railway line'. However, the Group also stated that it would 'have no objection' to a revision of Bromley North and Bromley South but would not support 'more extensive change... which would affect the Commission's Mile End or Poplar North wards'. This view was echoed by Councillor Golds in his submission. The Conservative Group also proposed a minor boundary change to the eastern boundary of Mile End, arguing that the boundary should not run along the eastern edge of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park but rather through the cemetery itself. Councillor Aston supported this amendment, arguing along with the Conservative Group that it gave 'a better shape to the Mile End ward'.

80 We have carefully considered the evidence we received for this area. We acknowledge that there is clearly strong evidence which links the British Street Estate with the estates we have included within our proposed Mile End ward. We note the concern expressed in representations that the draft proposals may be detrimental to local community identity.

81 We therefore investigated whether it would be possible to include the British Street Estate area in the Mile End ward and use the DLR line as a western boundary for the Bromley North ward. However, we noted that such an arrangement would have a severe detrimental impact upon the electoral equality of the area. This modification would result in the Bromley North and Mile End wards having 37% fewer and 22% more electors than the borough average in by 2018, respectively. In our view, this level of electoral inequality is unacceptably high. To avoid these unacceptable levels of electoral inequality would require an arbitrary and substantial re-warding of the Bromley and Poplar areas. We are also of the view that the minor modification proposed by the Conservative Group and Councillor Aston – to run the

eastern boundary of Mile End ward through the cemetery rather than around it – would not tie the boundary to any ground detail and would not provide a clear boundary.

82 To ensure the best balance between the statutory criteria through the whole of the Poplar, Bromley and Mile End areas, we have therefore decided to confirm our draft proposals for the Mile End, Bromley North and Bromley South wards as final. These wards would have 2% fewer, 1% fewer and 1% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

83 We also received opposition to the name of our proposed Mile End ward from Councillor Aston. He asserted that the proposed Mile End ward did not reflect the community commonly understood as Mile End. He argued that the ward would be better named Burdett, after the main arterial road running through the ward. He also proposed that the ward could be named Bow Common, which was ‘in general use for the area’. In contrast, the Conservative Group argued that Mile End would ‘be accepted as the general name for the area’.

84 Having considered the evidence provided, we are of the view that the proposed ward contains the majority of the ‘Mile End estates’ as previously detailed and that the name remains the most appropriate for the community within the ward. We therefore propose no change to the name for this area and confirm the name Mile End as final.

## Tower Hamlets Central West

85 Tower Hamlets Central West is a densely populated urban area comprising the areas of Stepney, Shadwell, Whitechapel and Wapping.

86 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the proposals of the Mayor, the Conservative Group and the Labour Group, subject to some modifications to provide for stronger boundaries and improved levels of electoral equality. Our draft recommendations were for two-member Stepney East, Stepney West, Shadwell and St Katharine’s & Wapping wards, and a three-member Whitechapel ward. Under our draft recommendations, no ward was projected to have a variance greater than 10% from the borough average by 2018.

### **Stepney, Whitechapel, Shadwell and Wapping**

#### *Stepney*

87 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 35 submissions which commented on our proposals for this area. These were from the Mayor, the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, five councillors and 27 residents.

88 We received both support and opposition to our proposals for this area. The Labour Group affirmed that it was ‘pleased that the Commission largely accepted’ its proposals for Stepney East and Stepney West. The Conservative Group stated that it accepted that the eastern and western boundaries of the two proposed Stepney wards offered ‘strong boundaries’. It added that it was ‘very pleased’ that the southern boundaries of Stepney East and Stepney West were ‘both bounded at the southern end by the A13 (Commercial Road)’.

89 However, the Conservative Group also expressed opposition to the proposed north-east boundary of Stepney West and suggested a modification. As part of the draft proposals, we recommended that this boundary should run along the back of the properties to the east of Stepney Green. The Group argued that this was ‘a very indistinct boundary’ and proposed that the boundary should instead follow the western carriageway of Stepney Green. The Conservative Group stated that houses on the eastern side of Stepney Green were ‘part of the Stepney Green conservation area’ while those properties to the west were ‘post-war social housing’. The Group argued that their proposal would make for a ‘better, more easily understood, boundary’. This proposal was also made by Councillor Golds and by a local resident. The resident argued that Stepney Green was a ‘natural boundary’ and that the properties on the east side of the road linked ‘into the streets and community east of the road’.

90 Having considered the evidence and investigated this modification, we note that it would have an adverse impact on electoral equality in the area. Under this modification, the Stepney West ward would have 11% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018. While we acknowledge that some evidence of community identity has been provided, we are not persuaded that the evidence justifies this level of electoral inequality. On balance, therefore, we are not minded to adopt this modification as part of our final recommendations.

91 Councillor Aston proposed a significant reworking of the wards in this area. He argued that the proposed western boundary of the Stepney West ward along Sidney Street ‘divides a community’ and was not a strong boundary. He proposed an alternative arrangement for a three-member St Dunstan’s & Stepney Green ward which combined the entirety of our proposed Stepney East ward and part of our proposed Stepney West ward. He proposed that the ward’s western boundary should run along Jubilee Street, Stepney Way, Jamaica Street and West Arbour Street. Councillor Aston proposed that the area to the west of this boundary should be included in a two-member Whitechapel North ward (paragraphs 100–1).

92 Councillor Aston argued that his proposal kept communities together, provided for stronger boundaries than the draft recommendations, and provided good electoral equality.

93 We have carefully considered the evidence we received for this area and are of the view that Councillor Aston’s proposal does provide for strong boundaries and for good electoral equality. We also note that it keeps together those communities we sought to reflect in our proposals. However, we have received support for our Stepney wards from local interests which argued that the draft proposals also use strong boundaries and reflect communities. On balance, we are not persuaded that Councillor Aston’s proposals – a significant reworking of the draft proposals – provide for a better balance between the statutory criteria.

94 We therefore confirm the boundaries of our proposed Stepney West and Stepney East wards as final. Under our final recommendations, these wards would have 7% fewer and 5% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018.

95 We also received significant opposition to the names of our proposed Stepney wards, particularly Stepney East. The Mayor, the Labour Group, the Conservative Group, five councillors and 27 residents all argued that St Dunstan’s & All Saints Church should be reflected in the name of the ward. Councillor Shahed Ali argued

that the church served 'as an integral landmark for the Stepney area'. Reverend Critchlow, Rector of St Dunstan's, argued that there was an 'important and significant historical connection' between the church and the area and that this association had 'existed for more than 1,000 years'. This view was echoed by each of the local residents. One local resident argued that the proposed name of Stepney East 'significantly' broke ties which were 'easily identifiable'.

96 Several names were proposed as possible alternatives for the wards in this area. Regarding Stepney East, the Mayor and 14 residents proposed that the name should be St Dunstan's & Stepney East, while the Labour Group, the Conservative Group and four councillors proposed the name St Dunstan's. For Stepney West, the Conservative Group and Councillor Golds proposed the name Redcoat. The Group argued that this name was 'historic' and that Redcoat School, after which a previous ward was named, was located within the proposed ward. The Labour Group proposed the name Stepney Green for this ward.

97 Having considered the evidence, we accept that the names proposed for this area as part of the draft recommendations do not reflect local communities. We have therefore decided to adopt the name St Dunstan's in place of Stepney East. We are of the view that this name reflects the historic and ongoing association of the local community with the church. We also propose to adopt the name Stepney Green in place of Stepney West. In our view, this name reflects the communities around Stepney Green which have been included in this ward.

#### *Whitechapel, Shadwell, and Wapping*

98 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received nine submissions which commented on our proposals for this area. These were from the Mayor, the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, three councillors and three local residents.

99 Opposition was expressed to our draft proposals in this area by the Labour Group. Our draft recommendations proposed that the Highway – a main road in the area – should be used as the southern boundary of our proposed Whitechapel and Shadwell wards and the northern boundary of our proposed St Katharine's & Wapping ward. The Labour Group opposed this arrangement. The Group argued that 'the Highway, although a significant road, is not a defining feature which separates the lives of residents of those living north of it from those living south of it'. The Group asserted that the Highway was 'crossed by residents on a daily basis to make use of community facilities including schools, health services, a sports centre, parks, a post office and council offices'. The Labour Group argued that the boundary of the St Katharine's & Wapping ward should therefore be moved north from the Highway to the DLR line, which would result in the St George's estate and Royal Mint area being included in the St Katharine's & Wapping ward.

100 Councillor Aston also proposed alternative arrangements for this area, arguing for a two-member Whitechapel North ward to the west of his proposed St Dunstan's & Stepney Green ward (discussed in paragraphs 91–3). The proposed Whitechapel North ward used Commercial Road as a southern boundary and ran as far west as the intersection between Commercial Road and Whitechapel High Street. He also proposed a two-member Whitechapel South ward to the south of Commercial Road. His proposed ward was bounded to the south by the Highway, to the east by Cannon Street Road, and to the west by the borough boundary. Councillor Aston argued in

particular that Commercial Road is 'perhaps the strongest' dividing line between communities in Tower Hamlets.

101 However, we also received support from a number of representations for our draft proposals in this area. The Mayor stated that he was pleased we had 'broadly accepted' his proposals for Whitechapel and St Katharine's & Wapping. He stated that he was 'also pleased to see that [the Commission] maintained the integrity of Shadwell, a finite community which deserves recognition as an electoral ward'. The Conservative Group and Councillor Golds affirmed their support for each of our proposed Whitechapel, St Katharine's & Wapping and Shadwell wards, subject to a proposed minor modification to the eastern boundary of St Katharine's & Wapping around Keeper Wharf (already discussed in paragraphs 56–8). The Conservative Group stated that it supported the proposed Whitechapel ward on the grounds that it had 'strong boundaries in Cannon Street Road, Sidney Street and the A11'.

102 Along with Councillor Jones and three local residents, the Conservative Group also refuted the Labour Group's arguments regarding communities in the area. Councillor Jones argued that 'the residents living south of the Highway feel strongly that they form a separate community to those residents living north of the area'. This view was also expressed by a local resident, who argued that the Highway represented a 'real and natural geographic boundary' and that the area south of the Highway was a 'community' with 'its own foci'. The resident cited transport hubs, health facilities, churches and a high street.

103 Having considered the evidence provided, we remain of the view that the Highway is a significant boundary and that the draft recommendations reflect communities in the area. While we acknowledge that the Labour Group provided evidence related to communities which suggests links between residents to the north and south of the Highway, these views have been refuted by other respondents and there is strong support for our arrangements in this area. We are also of the view that, while Councillor Aston's proposals provide for strong boundaries and provide for good levels of electoral equality, we have received local support for our proposals for Whitechapel. Furthermore, given our final proposals for Stepney (discussed in paragraphs 87–94), Councillor Aston's proposed Whitechapel North ward would have 30% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018. We are of the view that this level of electoral equality is unacceptably high.

104 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Whitechapel, Shadwell, and St Katharine's & Wapping as final, subject to the modification to the eastern boundary of St Katharine's & Wapping around Keeper Wharf (discussed in paragraphs 56–8). Under our final recommendations, these wards would have 4% fewer, 2% fewer, and 6% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

## Tower Hamlets North

105 Tower Hamlets North is a densely populated urban area comprising the areas of Spitalfields, Bethnal Green and Bow.

106 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the proposals of the Mayor and the Conservative Group, subject to some modifications to provide for stronger boundaries. Our draft recommendations were for two-member Spitalfields,

Weavers and Bow West wards, and three-member St Peter's, Bethnal Green and Bow East wards. Under our draft recommendations, no ward was projected to have a variance greater than 10% from the borough average by 2018.

### **North-west Tower Hamlets: Bethnal Green, Weavers and Spitalfields**

#### *Weavers and Spitalfields*

107 During the consultation on our draft proposals, we received 50 submissions commenting on our proposals for this area. These were from the Mayor, the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, Rushanara Ali MP, 15 councillors, three local organisations and 28 local residents. We also received two petitions containing 1,472 and 326 signatures, respectively.

108 We received support for the boundaries of our draft recommendations in this area from the Mayor, the Conservative Group, two councillors and a local organisation. The Conservative Group stated that it 'strongly' supported our proposal for Weavers ward in its entirety and our proposed northern boundary of Spitalfields ward along the railway line. However, the Group and Councillor Aston proposed a modification to the eastern boundary of the Spitalfields ward, arguing that Brady Street would 'provide for a clearer boundary'. Spitalfields Community Group expressed support for our proposed Spitalfields ward. The Group argued that it represented a 'coherent community with shared interests' and that these 'common concerns' would be 'better represented at local authority level if the community remains a single, large ward, rather than being sub-divided as some have proposed'.

109 However, opposition was expressed to our proposed warding arrangements in this area. Spitalfields Action Group submitted a proposal for a single-member Spitalfields with Liberties ward which provided for good electoral equality and was supported by community evidence. Thirteen local residents and a local organisation also submitted representations in support of this ward. The proposal was supported by a well-evidenced case which set out the 'shared interests and common identity' of residents in the proposed ward. These views were echoed by many of the local residents, though one local resident submitted a response in direct opposition to this ward.

110 Given the detailed evidence provided to support this proposal, we carefully considered the option of a single-member Spitalfields with Liberties ward in this area. We acknowledge that evidence has been provided which suggests that the proposed ward represented a cohesive community. We also note that there has been some local support for the ward. However, the proposal has significant knock-on effects on the surrounding wards. While the impact upon the electoral equality of Weavers ward would not be significantly detrimental, the remainder of our proposed Spitalfields ward would be left with an electoral imbalance of more than 50%. To accommodate a single-member Spitalfields with Liberties ward and provide for good levels of electoral equality in the area, we therefore would be required to re-ward the surrounding Whitechapel, St Peter's, Weavers and Stepney wards without any supporting evidence. Given our responsibility to ensure the best balance between the statutory criteria across the whole borough, we do not propose to adopt a single-member Spitalfields with Liberties ward as part of our final recommendations.

111 Nor do we propose to adopt the modification proposed by the Conservative Group for the eastern boundary of Spitalfields. We are of the view that our proposed boundary – to the east of the Sainsbury's supermarket – is not a weaker boundary than Brady Street. The move would also involve the transfer of electors in Albion

Yard into St Peter's ward. We do not view the evidence as sufficiently compelling to do so.

112 We received a number of submissions concerning the name of our proposed Spitalfields ward. We note that this issue generated significant discussion locally and we welcome the submissions presented to us. We received 30 submissions and two petitions regarding this issue, both in support and in opposition to our proposal.

113 We received 20 submissions in opposition to the proposal, all of which argued that the existing ward name of Spitalfields & Banglatown should be retained. We also received two petitions – one presented by the Mayor and one presented by the Labour Group (1,798 signatures in total) – which also asserted that the name of the existing ward should be retained. In support of retaining the existing ward name, the Labour Group and Rushanara Ali MP argued that 'the Banglatown name was introduced to reflect the significant Bangladeshi population and the cross-cultural nature of the community. It reflects not only the geographic location but the role of Brick Lane as the heart of Britain's Bangladeshi community'. The Mayor argued that the name Spitalfields & Banglatown referred 'both to enduring historical significance of Spitalfields whilst accommodating recognition for the more recent cultural, resident and entrepreneurial contribution of the resident Bangladeshi community'. These views were echoed in the submissions from local residents and councillors across the borough.

114 Ten submissions were also submitted in support of our proposed name. Spitalfields Community Group argued that 'the term 'Banglatown' wrongly implies that the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets is restricted to the Spitalfields area rather than being an integral part of the whole borough'. Spitalfields Action Group echoed this point, and further argued that 'Spitalfields (and that alone) is a geographic name with deep historic roots and enduring community roots'. The Conservative Group stated that they had concerns that the name Spitalfields & Banglatown 'may have suggested that one particular community had a predominance in the area which is, in fact, a very diverse area which is home to many different communities'.

115 Having considered the weight of evidence provided, we acknowledge that there are strong opinions on both sides of this issue. In our view, however, the name Spitalfields & Banglatown would better reflect the community represented within the proposed ward. In particular, we note the argument that Banglatown is viewed by many as a geographic location as well as a reflection of the modern cultural significance of the resident Bangladeshi community. We are in agreement with the view that the name Spitalfields & Banglatown would preserve the continued historical importance of Spitalfields while reflecting the modern associations of the area with the Bangladeshi community around Brick Lane.

116 We have therefore decided to adopt the name Spitalfields & Banglatown as part of our final recommendations. Under our final proposals, this ward would have 8% more electors than the borough average by 2018.

#### *Bethnal Green*

117 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received eight submissions for this area. These were from the Mayor, the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, four councillors and a local resident.



118 Support was expressed for our proposed St Peter's and Bethnal Green wards by the Mayor, the Conservative Group, two councillors and a local resident. The Conservative Group stated that the proposed Bethnal Green ward provided for 'clear boundaries' and reflected community interests. However, while the Conservative Group supported our proposed St Peter's ward, it proposed a minor modification to the southern boundary, which we have discussed in the previous section (paragraphs 108–111). A local resident stated that they welcomed 'that Bethnal Green becomes one big ward,' arguing that 'with one big ward, it is also much easier to get police resources better allocated'.

119 We also received opposition for the proposed north-eastern boundary of our proposed St Peter's ward. The Labour Group, Councillor Bagshaw and Councillor Eaton argued that the boundary along Approach Road divided a community. Councillor Bagshaw and Councillor Eaton argued that 'the community on either side of the ward boundary is alike – architecturally, socially and demographically'. The Labour Group argued that this boundary ran 'through the middle of an estate'. Both submissions argued that the boundary should instead run along Old Ford Road, to the south of Approach Road.

120 Having considered the evidence, we are not persuaded that the evidence related to community identity is sufficiently compelling to move away from our draft recommendations in this area. While we note that the proposed modification would not have a detrimental impact on electoral equality in the area, we are not persuaded in this case that a boundary along Old Ford Road would provide for a better balance between the statutory criteria.

121 We also received representations regarding the names of our proposed St Peter's and Bethnal Green wards. The Labour Group argued that 'although the name St Peter's has some historic resonance having previously been a ward name, it does not reflect residents' current sense of the area'. The Group proposed the ward names Bethnal Green West and Bethnal Green East in place of St Peter's and Bethnal Green respectively. In support of the draft proposals, the Conservative Group 'welcome[d]' the name St Peter's and noted that the proposed Bethnal Green ward included 'Bethnal Green itself'.

122 Given the evidence provided, we are not persuaded that alternative ward names for the area would better reflect the communities included within the ward. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Bethnal Green and St Peter's as final. Under our final proposals, these wards would have 7% more and 2% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

## **Bow**

123 During the consultation on our draft proposals, we received nine submissions related to this area. These were from the Mayor, the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, four councillors and two local organisations.

124 The Labour Group, the Conservative Group, four councillors and two local organisations proposed identical modifications to the boundary between our proposed Bow East and Bow West wards. All of the submissions argued that our proposal to include the entirety of Victoria Park in the Bow East ward did not reflect the interests of local communities or provide for effective and convenient local government. The Labour Group argued that 'residents who live in the areas adjacent to [the park] have a particularly keen interest in the park' and that 'residents of Bow

West will naturally want to be able to raise any issues they have concerning the Park with their local councillors rather than having to go to the councillors for Bow East'. The Conservative Group argued that the proposals would mean that the 'Driffield Road Conservation area, which abuts the park, would not share representation with the park despite the direct impact of the issues [of the park] on residents in this area'. Victoria Park Friends Group and Victoria Park Community Association echoed this view and argued that the proposals would not allow issues relating to the park to be adequately represented. Each of the submissions proposed that the existing boundary through Victoria Park should be retained.

125 Having considered the evidence received, we are of the view that our draft proposals for this area would not reflect the interests of local communities. We acknowledge that matters related to the park affect residents in both our proposed Bow East and Bow West wards. We have therefore decided to amend our draft proposals so that the boundary runs through Victoria Park.

126 As at the previous stage, the Labour Group again argued that the ward name Bow East & Fish Island should be adopted for our proposed Bow East ward. The Group argued that 'Fish Island is a growing and increasingly distinct community' and that the 'name is increasingly used by local residents and by those in adjacent districts'.

127 Having considered the evidence provided, we remain of the view that the ward names of Bow East and Bow West more accurately reflect the communities represented by the warding arrangements on the ground within the borough of Tower Hamlets. We therefore confirm the names Bow East and Bow West as final. Under our proposal, the wards of Bow East and Bow West would have 2% fewer and 5% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

# Conclusions

128 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2018 electorate figures.

**Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements**

	Final recommendations	
	2012	2018
Number of councillors	45	45
Number of wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	3,813	4,417
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	10	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

**Final recommendation**  
 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets should comprise 45 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.



### 3 What happens next?

129 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Tower Hamlets Council in 2014.

#### Equalities

130 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.



## 4 Mapping

### Final recommendations for Tower Hamlets

131 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

**You can also view our final recommendations for Tower Hamlets on our interactive maps at [consultation.lgbce.org.uk](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk).**





## Appendix A

**Table A1: Final recommendations for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2012)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2018)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Bethnal Green	3	13,701	4,567	20%	14,215	4,738	7%
2	Blackwall & Cubitt Town	3	8,564	2,855	-25%	12,849	4,283	-3%
3	Bow East	3	10,809	3,603	-6%	13,047	4,349	-2%
4	Bow West	2	8,944	4,472	17%	9,239	4,620	5%
5	Bromley North	2	6,367	3,184	-17%	8,774	4,387	-1%
6	Bromley South	2	6,079	3,040	-20%	8,881	4,441	1%
7	Canary Wharf	2	7,859	3,930	3%	9,078	4,539	3%
8	Island Gardens	2	9,104	4,552	19%	9,461	4,731	7%
9	Lansbury	3	9,640	3,213	-16%	12,049	4,016	-9%
10	Limehouse	1	4,230	4,230	11%	4,476	4,476	1%
11	Mile End	3	11,120	3,707	-3%	13,001	4,334	-2%

**Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2012)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2018)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
12	Poplar	1	4,061	4,061	6%	4,872	4,872	10%
13	Shadwell	2	8,278	4,139	9%	8,653	4,327	-2%
14	Spitalfields & Banglatown	2	8,748	4,374	15%	9,501	4,751	8%
15	St Dunstan's	2	7,509	3,755	-2%	8,405	4,203	-5%
16	St Katharine's & Wapping	2	7,874	3,937	3%	8,344	4,172	-6%
17	St Peter's	3	12,551	4,184	10%	13,498	4,499	2%
18	Stepney Green	2	8,123	4,062	7%	8,211	4,106	-7%
19	Weavers	2	8,390	4,195	10%	9,563	4,782	8%
20	Whitechapel	3	9,647	3,216	-16%	12,660	4,220	-4%
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>171,598</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>198,777</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>3,813</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>4,417</b>	<b>–</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



## Appendix B

### Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk">www.nationalparks.gov.uk</a>
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision-making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or district, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the borough or district council

