

# Barriers to Politics Working Group Agenda

Tuesday, 14 March 2017  
7.30 pm,

Civic Suite  
Lewisham Town Hall  
London SE6 4RU

For more information contact: Sarah Assibey (Tel: 0208 314 8975)

This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

## Part 1

Item	Pages
1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair	1
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4. The Role of a Councillor (To follow)	
This agenda item will allow members to discuss the defined roles and responsibilities of councillors. The discussion will also allow members to discuss the perceptions of being a councillor, their expectations and experiences in the role.	
5. Future Meetings	7

# Barriers to Politics Working Group Members

Members of the committee, listed below, are summoned to attend the meeting to be held on Tuesday, 14 March 2017.

Barry Quirk, Chief Executive  
Friday, 3 March 2017

Councillor Suzannah Clarke	
Councillor Colin Elliott	
Councillor Joan Millbank	

# Agenda Item 1

<b>Barriers to Politics Working Group</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>ELECTION OF CHAIR &amp; VICE CHAIR</b>	
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Item No. 1</b>
<b>Ward</b>		
<b>Contributors</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	
<b>Class</b>	<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Date: 14 March 2017</b>

## **Recommendation**

To appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee for the existence of the Group.

# Agenda Item 2

Barriers to Politics Working Group			
<b>Title</b>	Declarations of Interest	<b>Item No.</b>	2
<b>Contributor</b>	Chief Executive		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1 (open)	14 March 2017	

## Declaration of interests

Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

### 1 Personal interests

There are three types of personal interest referred to in the Council's Member Code of Conduct:-

- (1) Disclosable pecuniary interests
- (2) Other registerable interests
- (3) Non-registerable interests

### 2 Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined by regulation as:-

- (a) Employment, trade, profession or vocation of a relevant person\* for profit or gain
- (b) Sponsorship –payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than by the Council) within the 12 months prior to giving notice for inclusion in the register in respect of expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses (including payment or financial benefit from a Trade Union).
- (c) Undischarged contracts between a relevant person\* (or a firm in which they are a partner or a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest) and the Council for goods, services or works.
- (d) Beneficial interests in land in the borough.
- (e) Licence to occupy land in the borough for one month or more.
- (f) Corporate tenancies – any tenancy, where to the member's knowledge, the Council is landlord and the tenant is a firm in which the relevant person\* is a partner, a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest.
- (g) Beneficial interest in securities of a body where:-
  - (a) that body to the member's knowledge has a place of business or land in the borough; and
  - (b) either
    - (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that body; or
    - (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person\* has a beneficial interest exceeds 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that class.

\*A relevant person is the member, their spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom they live as spouse or civil partner.

### (3) Other registerable interests

The Lewisham Member Code of Conduct requires members also to register the following interests:-

- (a) Membership or position of control or management in a body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Council
- (b) Any body exercising functions of a public nature or directed to charitable purposes, or whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy, including any political party
- (c) Any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25

### (4) Non registerable interests

Occasions may arise when a matter under consideration would or would be likely to affect the wellbeing of a member, their family, friend or close associate more than it would affect the wellbeing of those in the local area generally, but which is not required to be registered in the Register of Members' Interests (for example a matter concerning the closure of a school at which a Member's child attends).

### (5) Declaration and impact of interest on members' participation

- (a) Where a member has any registerable interest in a matter and they are present at a meeting at which that matter is to be discussed, they must declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered. The declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the matter is a disclosable pecuniary interest the member must take no part in consideration of the matter and withdraw from the room before it is considered. They must not seek improperly to influence the decision in any way. **Failure to declare such an interest which has not already been entered in the Register of Members' Interests, or participation where such an interest exists, is liable to prosecution and on conviction carries a fine of up to £5000**
- (b) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest they must still declare the nature of the interest to the meeting at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered, but they may stay in the room, participate in consideration of the matter and vote on it unless paragraph (c) below applies.
- (c) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member must consider whether a reasonable member of the public in possession of the facts would think that their interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair the member's judgement of the public interest. If so, the member must withdraw and take no part in consideration of the matter nor seek to influence the outcome improperly.
- (d) If a non-registerable interest arises which affects the wellbeing of a member, their family, friend or close associate more than it would affect those in the local area generally, then the provisions relating to the declarations of interest and withdrawal apply as if it were a registerable interest.

- (e) Decisions relating to declarations of interests are for the member's personal judgement, though in cases of doubt they may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

**(6) Sensitive information**

There are special provisions relating to sensitive interests. These are interests the disclosure of which would be likely to expose the member to risk of violence or intimidation where the Monitoring Officer has agreed that such interest need not be registered. Members with such an interest are referred to the Code and advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance.

**(7) Exempt categories**

There are exemptions to these provisions allowing members to participate in decisions notwithstanding interests that would otherwise prevent them doing so. These include:-

- (a) Housing – holding a tenancy or lease with the Council unless the matter relates to your particular tenancy or lease; (subject to arrears exception)
- (b) School meals, school transport and travelling expenses; if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or a school governor unless the matter relates particularly to the school your child attends or of which you are a governor;
- (c) Statutory sick pay; if you are in receipt
- (d) Allowances, payment or indemnity for members
- (e) Ceremonial honours for members
- (f) Setting Council Tax or precept (subject to arrears exception)

<b>Barriers to Politics Working Group</b>			
<b>REPORT</b>	Terms of Reference Barriers to Politics Working Group		
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	No	<b>Item No:</b>	3
<b>WARD</b>	N/A		
<b>CONTRIBUTORS</b>	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)		
<b>CLASS</b>	Part 1	<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2017

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Terms of Reference for the Barriers to Politics Working Group is presented for members to agree.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Group is recommended to agree its Terms of Reference.

## 3. Terms of Reference

- 3.1 On 22 February 2017, when agreeing the creation of the Barriers to Politics Working Group, Full Council agreed the following terms of reference for the Group:

- The Group aims to identify and investigate the various barriers that exist for individuals wishing to apply for, or undertaking the role of Councillor, and to put forward recommendations to Full Council on how to address them.
- The Group will focus on barriers in each equality stream.
- The Working Group will bring a report to Council by September 2017.
- The Group will have the power to invite expert witnesses and to request relevant officers to attend meetings.
- The Group will require appropriate officer time and resources to support its work.

<b>COUNCIL</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	Motion 5 in the name of Councillor Clarke to be seconded by Councillor Elliot	
<b>Key Decision</b>		Item No.
<b>Ward</b>		
<b>Contributors</b>	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)	
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date: February 22 2017

### Barriers to Politics Working Group

This Council resolves to establish a time-limited all-party Working Group to examine barriers to those wishing to enter politics as an elected member and, once elected, the barriers to remaining in post or progressing.

This Council notes;

- In 2014 32.7% of councillors and 18.8% of elected mayors were women. 13.1% of council leaders were women. In London 25% of Councils are led by women.
- There is no consistent reporting of the barriers and equality issues facing Councillors and how many are affected.
- Councillors have raised numerous concerns regarding the role of a Councillor including, but not exclusively: hours and the range of responsibilities, anti-social hours, financial issues including loss of benefits, and caring and disability issues.

This Council agree the following terms of reference:

- The Group aims to identify and investigate the various barriers that exist for individuals wishing to apply for, or undertaking the role of Councillor, and to put forward recommendations to Full Council on how to address them.
- The Group will focus on barriers in each equality stream.
- The Working Group will bring a report to Council by September 2017.
- The Group will have the power to invite expert witnesses and to request relevant officers to attend meetings.
- The Group will require appropriate officer time and resources to support its work.

<b>Barriers to Politics Working Group</b>			
<b>REPORT</b>	Future meetings		
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	No	<b>Item No:</b>	5
<b>WARD</b>	N/A		
<b>CONTRIBUTORS</b>	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)		
<b>CLASS</b>	Part 1	<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2017

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 A suggested timeline of meetings and reporting is suggested for members to discuss and agree.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The group is recommended to:
- Provisionally agree the dates of future meetings of the working group
  - Agree the focus of the next meeting of the working group as a result of the groups initial discussions

## 3. FUTURE MEETINGS

- 3.1 On 22 February 2017, when agreeing the creation of the Barriers to Politics Working Group, Full Council agreed that the group would bring a report to Council by September 2017.
- 3.2 To enable the Group to meet that reporting deadline and gather the necessary evidence, the following schedule of meetings is proposed:
- April (evidence session)
  - May (evidence session)
  - June (evidence session)
  - July (evidence session)
  - September (draft report considered and recommendations agreed)