

Referendum on the Councils Governance Model – a guide by Cllr Andrew Wood

Which referendum option should you vote for? Leader (also known as Leader and Cabinet) or Mayor as we have now

Questions that may help you decide	Which way to vote?
If you want to make sure that Lutfur Rahman has no chance of returning as the leader of Tower Hamlets	Vote Leader
If you trust your fellow voter's more then you trust Councillor's to choose the right person to lead	Vote Mayor
If you want the main person in charge to have to listen to Councillor's more as needs their votes	Vote Leader
If you want somebody to be able to remove a Leader/Mayor before the 4 years are up	Vote Leader
If you want elections to represent the will of the majority of voters (see 3 rd sheet)	Vote Mayor as 2 nd preference votes count
If you want the choice of leader to be decided in public in an election with rules which are enforceable and where bribery is an offence	Vote Mayor

What are the practical differences between the two systems?

Very little except for the method of election – both are strong leader models with a strong Executive – one person has all of the power in both systems

Mayor – you elect the Mayor under a supplementary vote system – gives outsiders a chance

Leader – Councillors pick the leader (probably first in a secret process within the Labour party) but Councillors are elected under the First Past the Post system – which means the Labour Party with 46% of the vote in 2018 got 93% of the Councillors – makes it almost impossible for outsiders to win

Currently 15 of 45 Councillors get extra responsibility and money (Special Responsibility Allowances worth £21k to £32k) because the Mayor has appointed them to jobs in his power to grant – this will be the same in both models – this is the power of patronage, 23 Councillors (out of 45) is the majority needed to win.

Leader elected for 4 years at the beginning of each term – so once appointed hard to get rid of although in theory Councillors can collectively replace the Leader when they want to – details still unclear on the process – that also depends on Labour party rules as well

What powers Cabinet members have – unclear, in the Mayoral system up to the Mayor to decide but that appears to be the same for the Leader model as well but as more reliant on Councillors maybe more willing to share power?

A guide to how representative elections results are in Tower Hamlets, as two different systems of voting

May 2018 Local Elections for Councillors – First Past the Post

Labour party get **46%** of vote but got **93%** of Councillors elected
 First Past the Post system gives biggest party the advantage
 But does mean 54% voted for other parties but not reflected in results

Election results by party		
Party name	Seats won	% of votes
Labour Party	42	46.12%
Conservative	2	9.83%
People's Alliance of Tower Hamlets	1	11.35%
Aspire	0	15.37%
Liberal Democrats	0	8.64%
Green Party	0	7.92%
Independent	0	< 1%
Women's Equality Party	0	< 1%
Renew	0	< 1%
Turnout:		41.85%

Note turnout only 42%

Mayoral Election – Supplementary Vote

In **2014** Lutfur Rahman got 43% first round + 12% of 2nd preference votes and wins

John Biggs got 33% + 88% not enough

In **2018** John Biggs got 48% of 1st preferences + 66% of 2nd preferences and wins

Rabina Khan got 17% and 34% not enough

2nd preference votes or supplementary votes give other candidates a better chance of winning and may change the outcome. More reflective of voter's intentions?

Election results for Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets Mayoral Election - Thursday, 22nd May, 2014

- Status: Published
- [Previous results for Tower Hamlets](#)
- [Summary of comparison with previous results for Tower Hamlets](#)

Tower Hamlets - results							
Election Candidate	Party	1st Pref	%	2nd Pref	%	Total	Outcome
Lutfur Rahman	Tower Hamlets First	36539	43.38%	856	11.64%	37395	Elected
John Biggs	Labour Party	27643	32.82%	6500	88.36%	34143	Not elected
Christopher Wilford	Conservative	7173	8.52%			Not elected	
Nicholas McQueen	UKIP	4819	5.72%			Not elected	
Chris Smith	Green Party	4699	5.58%			Not elected	
Reetendra Nath Banerji	Liberal Democrats	1959	2.33%			Not elected	
Hugo Pierre	Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition	871	1.03%			Not elected	

Election results for Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets Mayoral Election - Thursday, 3rd May, 2018

- Status: Published
- [Previous results for Tower Hamlets](#)
- [Summary of comparison with previous results for Tower Hamlets](#)

Election of a Mayor of Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets - results							
Election Candidate	Party	1st Pref	%	2nd Pref	%	Total	Outcome
John Biggs	Labour Party	37619	48.43%	7246	65.81%	44865	Elected
Rabina Khan	People's Alliance of Tower Hamlets	13113	16.88%	3765	34.19%	16878	Not elected
Abul Monsur Ohiid Ahmed	Aspire	11109	14.30%			Not elected	
Anwara Ali	Conservative	6149	7.92%			Not elected	
Elaine Bagshaw	Liberal Democrats	5598	7.21%			Not elected	
Ciaran Alasdair Jebb	Green Party	3365	4.33%			Not elected	
Hugo Pierre	Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition	728	0.94%			Not elected	

In May 2010 we had the same referendum choice, what were the results then?

Mayor 60%
 Leader 40%

Referendum results for Mayoral Referendum - Thursday, 11th May 2010

- Status: Published

Tower Hamlets - results		
Vote option	Votes	%
YES	60758	60.39%
NO	39857	39.61%

Voting Summary	
Details	Number
Total votes	100615
Electorate	162639
Number of ballot papers rejected	1203



FAQ – Frequently asked questions

Who can vote in the referendum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be registered to vote• be 18 or over on the day of the election ('polling day')• be registered at an address in the area you want to vote in• not be legally excluded from voting• a British citizen• an Irish or EU citizen (all of them)• a qualifying Commonwealth citizen
Which is the best system of local government? Mayor, Leader or Committee?	None, all have their issues, depends on culture, personalities, parties
Is this the same choice we had in the 2010 referendum?	Yes, we had the same referendum choice in May 2010, only 40% voted then to keep the Leader system
How long will this referendum choice last for?	10 years, government rules say you can only change your mind via another referendum but only from 10 years after the last one
Why does Newham have a different choice in their referendum? Between the Committee system and the Mayoral system	Because the Labour party in each area came to different conclusions as to what choice to give to voters The Labour party in Newham went through a more public discussion The Labour party in Tower Hamlets made the decision one night in a secret meeting we think (there is no detail on how they decided)
What will change after the vote?	Nothing will change until after the May 2022 local elections so Mayor John Biggs stays in post for another year even if Leader wins

What is the question on the Ballot Paper?

How would you like Tower Hamlets Borough Council to be run?

- By a **mayor** who is elected by voters. This is how the council is run now.

or

- By a **leader** who is an elected councillor chosen by a vote of the other elected councillors. This would be a change from how the council is run now.

You put an X against which option you prefer, one X only. The option with the most votes wins.

Key dates

- Register to vote deadline Monday 19th April Can do online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote
- Deadline for new postal vote applications and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes 5pm on Tuesday 20 April 2021
- Deadline for receiving new applications to vote by proxy 5pm on Tuesday 27 April 2021
- Polling day - 7am to 10pm Thursday 6th May

Got questions about this guide?

Contact me Cllr Andrew Wood, I wrote it to help me decide between the two options although I dislike both of them

Email: cllrandrewwood@gmail.com

Tel: 07710 486 873

Need to contact Electoral Services at Tower Hamlets Council

Address: Electoral Services, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

Tel: 020 7364 0872

Email: electoralservices@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Unhappy with the choices?

The Labour party in Tower Hamlets chose to reject the results of a petition which asked for a more open and transparent process to select the right referendum choices so as a result we are repeating the same referendum that we had in 2010.

The then Leader system was rejected 60/40 in favour of the new Mayoral system suggesting that people then did not think the Leader model worked either.

This is very different to what Newham Labour chose to do, which was more transparent, involved outside experts and was more public (even if still imperfect) and resulted in the Committee system as one of two choices (where there is no single strong leader but where Councillors have real power in specialist Committees to decide things)

Write In - Committee system

You can add to your ballot paper what is called a Write In, common in the US
It has no practical or legal implications in the UK, it is about sending a message

You could write at the very bottom what you think, for example the words 'Committee System' as the only other legal alternative or 'I do not like this choice' or whatever you like
But only do so separately from a clear X against your preferred option
Any writing needs to be clearly separate or will result in a spoiled ballot