

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 7 May 2020

**Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held at on
Thursday, 7 May 2020 at 1.45 pm**

Present

Members:

Deputy Catherine McGuinness (Chair)
Sheriff Christopher Hayward (Deputy Chairman)
Simon Duckworth (Vice-Chairman)
Deputy Tom Sleigh (Vice-Chair)
Randall Anderson (Ex-Officio Member)
Douglas Barrow (Ex-Officio Member)
Nicholas Bensted-Smith (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Keith Bottomley
Tijs Broeke
Karina Dostalova
Anne Fairweather
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman Timothy Hailes
Deputy Wendy Hyde (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Shravan Joshi
Deputy Edward Lord
Alderman Vincent Keaveny
Alderman Ian Luder
Jeremy Mayhew
Andrew McMurtrie
Wendy Mead
Deputy Brian Mooney (Chief Commoner) (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Alastair Moss (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Joyce Nash
Deputy Dr Giles Shilson
Jeremy Simons (Ex-Officio Member)
Sir Michael Snyder
Mark Wheatley
Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Alderman Sir David Wootton

In Attendance

Helen Fentimen
Alderman Sir Roger Gifford
Alderman Alison Gowman
Graeme Harrower
Graham Packham
Oliver Sells QC

Deputy James Thomson
William Upton QC

Officers:

John Barradell	- Town Clerk
Peter Lisley	- Assistant Town Clerk & Director of Major Projects
Angela Roach	- Assistant Town Clerk & Director of Member Services
Joseph Anstee	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Cunningham	- Town Clerk's Department
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Charlotte Gordon	- Town Clerk's Department
Sheldon Hind	- Town Clerk's Department
Richard Messingham	- Town Clerk's Department
Gregory Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Sanjay Odedra	- Town Clerk's Department
Devika Persaud	- Town Clerk's Department
Alex Redman	- Town Clerk's Department
Chloe Rew	- Town Clerk's Department
Peter Kane	- Chamberlain
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- Deputy Chamberlain
Danielle Maalouf	- Chamberlain's Department
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Paul Double	- Remembrancer
Paul Wright	- Deputy Remembrancer
Nigel Lefton	- Remembrancer's Department
Paul Wilkinson	- City Surveyor
Carolyn Dwyer	- Director of Built Environment
Paul Beckett	- Department of the Built Environment
Peter Shadbolt	- Department of the Built Environment
Damian Nussbaum	- Director of Innovation & Growth
Giles French	- Department of Innovation & Growth
Bob Roberts	- Director of Communications
Andrew Carter	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Mike Kettle	- Community & Children's Services Department
Paul Murtagh	- Community & Children's Services Department
Vic Annells	- Executive Director of Mansion House & Central Criminal Court

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by the Rt Hon The Lord Mayor, Alderman William Russell.

The Policy Chair welcomed the Chief Commoner to his first meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

2. **MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising

Standards Costs: A Member advised the Committee that she had received an answer from the Comptroller to the question she had raised at the 19 March meeting, concerning expenditure related to the activities of the Standards Committee. It was agreed that this information could be circulated to Members of the Committee and published on the website for transparency purposes.

4. **COVID RESPONSE**

Members heard an update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive and the Assistant Town Clerk & Gold Command, Peter Lisley, relating to the COVID response both at pan-London level and from the City of London Corporation.

The Town Clerk gave an update on the work of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) and informed Members that, as of Monday week, a number of staff would be returning from their secondments back to Guildhall, including the Director of Communications. The Town Clerk also committed to be back for the next meeting of the Court of Common Council.

The Assistant Town Clerk & Gold Command then gave an update on the City Corporation's response to COVID-19:

- He reported that provision of public services was stable.
- Open Spaces were expecting a busy bank holiday weekend ahead.
- It was important to avoid burnout and he had encouraged staff to take a break over the weekend.
- Testing was now available to all staff through a self-book portal or via HR but sickness levels were low, including anxiety and stress.
- There had been no community deaths (excluding deaths at St Bartholomew's Hospital).
- Chief Officers were now looking at a phased return to normal activity, both in a London context and for our own staff, particularly looking at transport and the importance of this for City businesses.
- It was expected that the Government announcement on Sunday would confirm that staff should continue to work from home where possible.
- Sadly, one loss of life due to COVID-19 had been experienced within the City of London Police and one member of City Corporation staff remained seriously ill.

Members expressed gratitude to officers and volunteers for their work during these unprecedented times. It was suggested that it would be important to take an overall strategic view whilst working on the plans for the next phase and that this Committee should play a substantive role in the governance and oversight associated with this.

5. COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS - POSSIBLE POSTPONEMENT OF THE CITY-WIDE ELECTIONS IN MARCH 2021

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk outlining options around the possible postponement of the City-wide elections in March 2021.

The Chair highlighted that, notwithstanding the fact that this report was being presented for decision now, given the importance of the issue it was felt that it might be premature to make a decision at this juncture and before clarity was available in respect of any prospective easing of restrictions on movement. Members agreed that a final decision on a date for the election should be deferred until a later meeting. However, the Committee expressed the strong view that the election should not take place on the same date as the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections.

A Member also suggested that the elections be deferred for a full year and for new electors to then be elected on a three-year term.

It was suggested that there should be cognisance of the likely reduction in office occupancy levels extending for a protracted period, possibly until the time when a vaccine was in place, with the consequential effect on the electorate and canvassing activity borne in mind. It was also suggested that now could be an opportune time to look at exploring electronic voting and potentially leading the way in this regard.

RESOLVED: That:-

1. Consideration of the timing of the 2021 City elections be deferred until a future meeting.
2. It be agreed that the City elections should be held on a separate date to the London Mayor and GLA elections.

6. REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURE RULES

The Committee discussed a report relating to protocols and procedures associated with the management of remote meetings.

Members heard how officers were also looking at alternative technologies, such as Zoom, as well as exploring the full functionality of Microsoft Teams.

The Town Clerk also took the opportunity to update Members on progress in respect of arrangements for a virtual meeting of the Court of Common Council on 21 May. Whilst there were a minor number of technical considerations awaiting final testing, there was confidence that the Court should be able to convene and meet effectively, provided that the same discipline was applied with respect to the rules around the conduct of debate as proscribed by standing orders for physical meetings. It was highlighted that the key issue would be in relation to voting where the limitations of applications tested to-date presented some minor issues, particularly in relation to ballots where multiple votes would need to be cast, as well as the secrecy of such ballots.

Members echoed the Chair's thanks to officers for the hard work that had been undertaken to make arrangements for remote meetings.

A number of Members indicated their preference for Zoom to be looked at as a technological solution for the longer-term, rather than Microsoft Teams.

A Member also highlighted some issues that were experienced with the chat function and the etiquette for using this. Whilst it was inarguably convenient and helpful for Members to use the function to share sentiment or opinions on an item amongst themselves, he observed that it was sometimes extremely difficult to chair a meeting whilst following a substantive debate in the chat function and also noting who wished to speak on an item, particularly where large numbers of people were participating in the meeting. He supported officers' advice in this area and urged Members to only use the chat box to indicate they wished to speak.

Another Member asked whether a permanent record of the live stream could be made available as a matter of public record. It was confirmed that this was possible and was being explored at present to ensure it was managed in a fashion that was compliant with relevant data protection regulations.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the protocols set out be endorsed.

7. **NOMINATIONS TO LONDON COUNCILS**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning nominations to London Councils.

With reference to the Lead Member appointment for Arts/Culture, Tourism, Sport and Leisure, it was observed that engagement by and with the various Open Spaces Committee Chairs had been extremely helpful in the recent period and it was asked whether this extended consultation could be continued. Officers suggested that they expected London Councils would welcome the suggestion and undertook to seek to facilitate this accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the overriding principle of nominating the Chairman for the time being of the most relevant Committee to serve on London Councils committees be endorsed and the following individuals be nominated to act as lead Member for particular areas of work as follows:-

- **Leaders' Committee** - Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee with a Deputy/Vice Chair as named deputy.
- **Transport and Environment Committee** – Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee, with the Chairman of Port Health and Environment Committee and the Deputy Chairmen of both these committees serving as the named deputies.
- **Grants Committee** - Chairman of the City Bridge Trust Committee, with the Deputy Chairman as named deputy.
- **Greater London Employment Forum** – Chair of the Establishment Committee.
- **Lead Member for Children and Young People** - Chairman of the Community & Children's Services Committee.

- **Lead Member for Skills and Employment** – Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee.
- **Lead Member for Economic Development/Business** – Chair of Policy & Resources Committee.
- **Lead Member for Crime and Public Protection** - Chairman of the Police Authority Board.
- **Lead Member for Arts/Culture, Tourism, Sport and Leisure** – Chair of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, with the Chairs of the three Open Spaces Committees also included within consultation arrangements.
- **Lead Member for Housing & Regeneration** - Chairman of the Community & Children's Services Committee.
- **Lead Member for Health and Social Care including Adult Services** - Chairman of the Community & Children's Services Committee.
- **Lead Member for Planning/Infrastructure/Development** – Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee.
- **Lead Member for Finance and Corporate Services** – Chairman of the Finance Committee.

8. **CITY OF LONDON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: PROPOSED PUBLICATION OF THE CITY PLAN 2036**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Built Environment reviewing the City Corporation's Local Plan. The Chair of Planning & Transportation introduced the item and commended the report.

In response to a query concerning the consultation process, it was advised that the hope was that the process would be straightforward and the Plan could be submitted to the Secretary of State accordingly. However, the report would return for committee approval in the event of any substantive or significant feedback emerging.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The proposed City Plan 2036 set out at Appendix 1 of the report be published for consultation.
2. The Director of Built Environment be authorised to make further non-material amendments and editorial changes prior to public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State.

9. **CAPITAL FUNDING UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain proposing the release of funds to allow two schemes to progress to the next gateway.

A Member, also the Chair of the Projects Sub-Committee, raised a specific concern in relation to the Chiller Plant Replacement project and expanding the options appraisal. He observed that the report seemed to suggest the potential to change scope later in the gateway process and emphasised that the options appraisal process should not be seen as a mechanism to achieve this, stressing that there should be a clear scope and capital allocation from the outset. The City Surveyor agreed with the Member's comment and committed to looking at this in more detail.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The allocation of central funding of up to £281.2k be approved to allow two schemes be progressed to the next gateway, viz.:
 - a. Guildhall Complex Chiller Plant replacement - £174.2
 - b. Guildhall Steam Plant Replacement - £107k
2. It be noted that work is underway to identify priority schemes to be progressed during the current crisis to ensure that funding for only the most essential schemes is committed for the time being.

10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were two questions:

Government Grants to Small Businesses

A Member made reference to recently revised rules concerning the payment of COVID-related grants from Government, which were being allocated through local councils. In particular, clarity was sought around capacity to make payments to small companies.

The Chamberlain advised that these rules had changed in only the past few days and that further guidance from Government was awaited. However, it was currently anticipated that the available pot of money for City businesses would be insufficient to provide meaningful relief for all now eligible. Efforts were underway to make the case with Government in respect of additional resources to support such businesses.

COVID-19 Contingency Fund

In response to a query concerning expenditure from this Fund, it was clarified that this would be reported on as part of the regular report on expenditure and commitments from the various Funds under the Committee's control.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Member Consultation

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning the matter of Member consultation and engagement.

Some concerns regarding the interim arrangements that had been in place during the immediate COVID response were noted. It was hoped that the proposed thematic groups would provide a mechanism for Members to advise on emerging issues or give a steer at an early stage on reports that could then be developed for consideration at Committee. It was recognised that any such system would have limitations and it was not always possible or practical to canvas the views of 125 Members on all items. However, the Chair was keen to ensure that a practical method of facilitating a wider range of input on policy matters was in place.

It was also agreed that the proposed informal fortnightly Resource Allocation Sub-Committee meetings should have a formal component too, in order to facilitate any urgent decisions being made in a more transparent fashion.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the proposed arrangements agreed.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 19 March 2020 were approved.

14. **ISLINGTON ARTS FACTORY**

Members considered and approved a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Holloway Estate Islington Arts Factory.

15. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There was one question, concerning matters in relation to the relaxation of COVID-related movement restrictions.

16. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED.**

There was one item of urgent business, concerning Innovate Finance.

17. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2020 were approved.

The meeting ended at 15:10

Chair

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