

Committee: Policy & Resources Committee	Date: 14 March 2019
Subject: Unconscious Bias Training and Nomenclature	Public
Report of: Town Clerk on behalf of the Members Diversity Working Party	For Decision
Report author: Leanne Murphy, Town Clerk's Department	

Summary

1. At its meeting on 13 December 2018, the Policy & Resources Committee considered the outcome of the work undertaken by its Members Diversity Working Party (MDWP) to help enhance the diversity of the Court and promote the merits of standing for office as a Common Councilman or an Alderman. The Policy & Resources Committee supported the general direction of travel of the 19 recommendations presented to it, subject to more detailed reports being considered on the individual items. This paper considers the Working Party's recommendations regarding two issues: nomenclature and unconscious bias training.
2. Members play an important role in encouraging people to stand for office. Consequently, the MDWP felt that appropriate training should be put in place so that Members looked beyond encouraging people to stand from similar backgrounds to themselves. It was also of the view that a similar principle applied when electing Members to committees. To address this, the Working Party recommended that unconscious bias training be included as part of the Member Development Programme.
3. In terms of nomenclature, the Working Party concluded that, in order to put the City of London Corporation more in line with business and society at large, consideration should be given to the use of alternative terms for *Common Councilmen* and *Chairmen* in all communication and non-legal documentation. The MDWP's recommendation was that *Chair* should now be the default for Chairmen and, whilst it considered two alternatives to Common Councilmen, *Common Councillors* and *Councillors*, its clear preference was to change to *Councillor*. It should be noted that there was no recommendation to change the term Alderman.
4. The Policy & Resources Committee considered the use of *Chairman* and/or *Chair* at its meeting 17 January 2019. It was of the view that a pragmatic approach should be taken and agreed that the default position should continue to be *Chairman*, with *Chair* being used by an incumbent if they chose to do so.
5. The term *Common Councilman* dates back several hundred years and is currently used in Acts of Parliament and Acts of Common Council. Notwithstanding this, there is nothing preventing Members resolving to use an alternative, gender neutral, term in the vernacular going forward. Views are now sought on the

proposed use of the terms *Councillors* or *Common Councillors* noting that the Working Party's clear preference was to use *Councillor*.

Recommendation

6. Members are asked to consider:-

- whether unconscious bias training for Members should be included in the Member Development Programme; and
- whether an alternative, gender neutral, title to Common Councilman, such as *Councillor* or *Common Councillor*, should now be used in all communications and documents, other than documents intended to have legal effect, noting that the Working Party's clear preference was the use of *Councillor*.

Main Report

Background

1. In December 2018, as part of its work to enhance the diversity of the Court and promote the merits of standing for office as a Common Councilman or an Alderman, the Members Diversity Working Party (MDWP) presented its findings to the Policy & Resources Committee. In total 19 recommendations were advanced. The Committee supported the general direction of travel of the various measures, subject to more detailed reports being considered on the individual items. This report considers the Working Party's recommendations relating to nomenclature and unconscious bias training.

Unconscious Bias Training

2. Unconscious (or implicit) biases are views and opinions of which we are unaware, which are activated automatically, and which are influenced by our background, culture, context and personal experiences. It can include race, gender, appearance, religion, disability, sexuality, social background and age.
3. Given the important role Members often play in encouraging people to stand for office and the fact that research has shown that there is a link between self-perception and unconscious bias, the Working Party noted that unconscious bias training was available and that it was designed to raise awareness in this area. The MDWP therefore felt that this type of training might assist Members in looking beyond encouraging people from similar backgrounds to themselves to stand for election. It recommended that unconscious bias training is included as part of the Member Development Programme.
4. Unconscious bias training is also suggested as one of the undertakings that should be referenced in the proposed Voluntary Charter, which is the subject of a separate report elsewhere on the agenda.
5. In addition, it should be noted that many businesses have already taken positive steps in this area. For example, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) have undergone a very public commitment to diversity, publishing a business case for diversity and

inclusion through their PwC [diversity journey](#) which includes a commitment 'to undertaking unconscious bias training'.

6. Internally, unconscious bias training is available for all City Corporation employees. Training is, therefore, already available and can be adapted for Members. Unconscious bias features in our *Crucial Conversations* and the *Recruitment and Selection* training courses and in *Equally Yours*, a new course incorporating an interactive game, the aim of which is to build understanding and confidence in managing diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Unlike other equalities training for employees, currently, unconscious bias training is not mandatory. However, its status is in the process of being reviewed as part of a wider review of mandatory training for employees.
7. As part of its deliberations the Working Party also considered whether unconscious bias training should be mandatory. Currently, all Member training is offered on a voluntary basis. In considering whether unconscious bias training ought to be mandatory, thought would also need to be given to whether there needed to be any consequences for not undertaking the training and whether any other areas of training such as the Members Code of Conduct, the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations or General Data Protection Regulation should also be considered in the same vein. Given the above, it is not felt that this training should be mandatory.

Nomenclature

8. In terms of nomenclature, the MDWP acknowledged the importance of the City Corporation being more in line with business and society at large. It questioned whether use of terms such as *Common Councilman* and *Chairman* were still fit for purpose. The Working Party felt that adherence to tradition might be contributing to the perception, by some, that the City Corporation was outdated. Consequently, it could discourage potential candidates from standing. In addition, the MDWP noted that *Councillor* was used by all other UK institutions with local authority functions and that some Members already referred to themselves as such in external correspondence. Therefore, an alternative, gender neutral, reference should now be used.
9. The Working Party has recommended that the Grand Committee considers whether Common Councilmen should now be referred to as either, *Councillors* or *Common Councillors* and to Chairmen being called *Chair* in all the City Corporation's communication and non-legal documentation. The MDWP's clear recommendation was that *Chair* should be the default for Chairmen and, whilst it considered two alternatives to Common Councilmen, *Common Councillors* and *Councillors*, its preference was to now change to *Councillor*. It should be noted that there was no recommendation to change the term Alderman.
10. The use of Chairman was considered by the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting in January. The Committee was of the view that a pragmatic approach should be taken to accommodate peoples' wishes. It agreed that the term *Chair* could also be used by an incumbent as an alternative. This Committee, the

Establishment Committee and the Property Investment Board have recently endorsed the use of *Chair* for their Chairmen.

11. Use of the term *Common Councilman* dates back several hundred years, although a variety of names have been used to describe the office over the centuries. *Common Councilman* is the term currently used in Acts of Parliament and Acts of Common Council, and the use of an alternative term should be avoided in documents intended to have legal effect, at least without further interpretation. Notwithstanding this, there is nothing preventing Members resolving to use an alternative, gender neutral, reference in the vernacular going forward.
12. At its last meeting this Committee also noted a resolution of the Establishment Committee on nomenclature which included references to the City Corporation's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty when considering matters such as this and the advice that careful consideration should be given to requests which could have an impact of people with protected characteristics and the organisation's reputation.

Equality Impact Assessment

13. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public authorities, when exercising their functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:-
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
14. It is considered that unconscious bias training and moving to a gender neutral term for Common Councilmen might have a positive impact on the City Corporation's aspirations in terms of Member diversity and advancing equality.

Conclusion

15. The MDWP presented a number of possible actions which might assist in further improving Member diversity including the introduction of unconscious bias training for Members and the issue of nomenclature. In terms of nomenclature, the Committee has already agreed that a pragmatic approach should be taken with regard to use of the term Chairman and Chair. Consideration now needs to be given to use of the term Common Councilman in future.
16. Regarding unconscious bias training, the Working Party acknowledged the importance Members played in encouraging people to stand for office and that this often meant looking at people from similar backgrounds to themselves. The introduction of appropriate training might assist Members in recognising some of the influences of which they are unaware, to possibly look beyond people from similar backgrounds to themselves and, in so doing, widen the talent pool. Members' views are sought on this.

Appendices – None

Background Papers:-

- *‘Enhancing the Diversity of the Court of Common Council’* – Report of the Town Clerk on behalf of the Members Diversity Working Party (Policy & Resources Committee, 13 December 2018)
- Resolution of the Establishment Committee, 16 January 2019

Contacts:

Angela Roach, Assistant Town Clerk and Director of Members Services

T: 020 7332 3685

E: angela.roach@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Leanne Murphy, Committee and Member Services Officer

T: 020 7332 3008

E: leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk