

<b>Committee(s):</b> Policy and Resources Committee	<b>Date(s):</b> 12 December 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Members' Diversity Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> The Town Clerk & Chief Executive	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Angela Roach, Assistant Town Clerk and Director of Members Services & Emma Cunningham, Head of Chairmen's Support Services	

### Summary

At its meeting on 13 December 2018, the Policy & Resources Committee considered the outcome of the work undertaken to help enhance the diversity of the Court and promote the merits of standing for office as a Common Councilman or an Alderman by its Members Diversity Working Party (MDWP). Of the 20 recommendations presented 17 were approved.

Whilst most of the recommendations have been progressed a number are dependent on the appointment of a dedicated senior Officer responsible for Member diversity and inclusion such as the delivery of promotional activities, networking and engaging with other business groups. The recruitment and appointment of this post is currently on hold due to the fundamental review and the moratorium currently in place on recruitment.

The remaining 9 recommendations have been progressed and are detailed in this report.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Following a report of the Members Diversity Working Party (MDWP) to the Policy & Resources Committee in December 2018, it was agreed that recommendations relating to enhancing diversity of the Court of Common Council be looked at in more detail and be subject to further decision-making by the Committee in due course.
2. Your Committee rejected two recommendations of the MDWP: the introduction of a new dedicated (formal) Diversity and Inclusion Sub Committee and Members not participating in all male events or speaking on all male panels unless participation assists in altering the balance. Approval was given for the remaining

recommendations to be looked at in more detail and the purpose of this paper is to update Members on the progress of the agreed recommendations.

### **Current Position**

3. Recommendations that have already been reconsidered and fully approved by the Policy & Resources Committee are as follows:-

a. Set aspirations for diversity representation on the Court of Common Council by 2021 and 2025 elections

At its meeting in March 2019, this Committee set aspirations for representation on the Court of Common Council by the 2021 and 2025 elections and agreed that these should be 30% female and 15% BAME by 2021, and 42% female and 22% BAME by 2025. In addition, Members requested an analysis of the output following the two elections.

b. Voluntary Members' Diversity Charter

At its meeting in March 2019, this Committee approved the introduction of a voluntary Diversity Charter for Members to consider signing up to as a public show of commitment and to help drive the debate internally on diversity and inclusion. This Charter has since been circulated to the Court of Common Council and, so far, 40 Members have elected to sign it. When new Members are elected to the Court, they are also invited to sign the Charter as part of their induction. A further reminder about the Charter will be sent to Members in the New Year.

c. Nomenclature

In March 2019, this Committee agreed that the gender-neutral title of "Common Councillor" be used in all communications and documents in place of "Common Councilman", with the exception of documents intended to have legal effect. This change has been implemented. The Committee also supported the title "Chairman" remaining as the default but with Members having the option of being referred to as "Chair" if they so wish.

d. Unconscious Bias Training

In March 2019, this Committee agreed that unconscious bias training be added to the Member Development Programme. To date, internal learning and development specialists have been designing a bespoke equalities and inclusion training course that will be delivered to Members. The first of these training sessions will take place on Monday 2 March 2020.

e. Meeting timings and technology

In November 2018, this Committee noted that current legislation did not allow Members to participate fully in local government meetings via audio or video link. Nevertheless, it was keen to support the principle of officers and Members participating in non-local government meetings and agreed to the use of via video link at meetings of the Board of Governors of the City of London Freeman's School on a trial basis. Members also instructed the Chamberlain, in consultation with the City Surveyor, to report on the budget allocation required to facilitate virtual meetings more generally. An estimated cost of

providing the relevant technology in meeting rooms will be the subject of a bid for resources in the next round of the capital bid process.

Notwithstanding this, and whilst there are legal restrictions, the use of technology to participate in other meetings has been made available to Members wherever possible.

In terms of the timing of meetings, whilst the previous desire of the majority of Members was to maintain the status quo, committees remain free to change the times of their meetings should they wish to do so. Chairmen have been reminded of this and have been asked to be mindful that altering the time could have wider resource implications.

f. Committee election system

At its meeting in February 2019, this Committee considered the MDWP's recommendation to review the First Past the Post voting system for committee elections to ascertain whether it would help to improve diversity. Members noted that the Court had given consideration to voting systems in early 2016 and introduced an Alternative Vote system for elections to single vacancies. The arrangements seemed to be working well and it was agreed that the status quo should be retained.

g. Ballot Paper Statistics

At its meeting in February 2019, this Committee agreed that statistics of a committee's breakdown in terms of gender and race be added to ballot papers to help keep diversity at the forefront of Members' minds. In order to do this, a voluntary survey was carried out to understand the demographics of the current composition of the Court of Common Council in terms of sex and ethnicity. Data was collected and securely stored by the Committee and Members Services team. Although there was only a 46% response rate to the survey, breakdown statistics are now added to ballot papers for Committee vacancies.

h. Encouraging diversity in partner organisations – including Livery

The Chair of the MDWP wrote to the Town Clerk and Lord Mayor earlier this year highlighting the importance of the admission of women in Livery Companies. The Town Clerk and Lord Mayor were urged to provide targeted messaging concerning diversity and inclusion in their remarks to Livery Masters and Clerks in order to encourage greater diversity.

i. Ancillary support to Members

The MDWP was keen that, as a minimum, a support system similar to that available for staff should be available for Members. As a result of this, the Director of HR has been able to extend the Employee Assistance Programme to Members. The programme offers free and confidential support on personal (e.g. debt, alcohol, drug and gambling issues), legal, financial and other practical issues. In addition, to maximise wellbeing during the flu season, Members are now able to reclaim the cost of a private flu vaccination (up to the maximum of £15 per member).

4. Recommendations that are still in progress are as follows:-

a. Better guidance for selecting voters

The MDWP asked the Director of Communications to ensure that material sent to companies regarding voter registration encouraged them to select a diverse representation of their workforce. We now include a message to businesses urging them to reflect the diversity of their employees when nominating voters. We repeat the message in a letter from the Town Clerk reminding businesses to register to vote. We have agreed to make these messages more prominent in future years.

b. Compensation/remuneration for Members

Following the MDWP's request for remuneration to be reviewed again with the sole aim of improving diversity and inclusion, it was noted that a Members Financial Assistance Working Party (MFAWP) had already been created to review the existing Financial Loss Scheme and establish whether any further assistance was required. The MFAWP has met on a number of occasions and as part of its deliberations it has been mindful of the MDWP's view that the absence of payment served as barrier to enhancing the diversity of City Corporation Councillors. The findings of the MFAWP which will include the views of an Independent Panel is scheduled to be reported to the Policy Committee in January.

5. Recommendations that are on hold are as follows:-

a. Appointing a dedicated senior Officer responsible for Member diversity and inclusion

The MDWP asked for consideration to be given to appoint a dedicated Senior Officer with overarching responsibility for promoting Member diversity and inclusion, with a budget. It was envisaged that the role would be responsible for the development of diversity events at Guildhall (e.g. Citizen Ceremonies), as well as other elements of work that it was anticipated would be pursued, such as diversity network engagement and the merits of a mentoring scheme. Shortly after this was discussed by the Committee, the Fundamental Review was brought in and a moratorium placed on recruitment. Notwithstanding this, it should be noted that the Diversity and Engagement Lead Officer based in HR is already liaising with diversity networks across the private sector as part of their role. Subject to discussion, it might be possible to streamline some of the outreach work it was envisaged should be undertaken by a dedicated role.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

6. The workstreams around increasing Members' diversity align to the Corporate Plan's strategic aim "Contributing to a flourishing society", specifically under aim 3: "People have equal opportunity to enrich their lives and reach their full potential."

## **Conclusion**

7. In conclusion, a large amount of work has been undertaken following the work of the MDWP. 10 recommendations are completed or are onto the next stage, 2

recommendations are still in progress and one recommendation is on hold pending the outcome of the fundamental review.

## Appendices

- None

## Background Papers

- [\*Virtual Meetings\*](#) – Report of the Town Clerk and Comptroller and City Solicitor submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2018
- [\*Enhancing the Diversity of the Court of Common Council\*](#) – Report of the Town Clerk submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 13 December 2018
- [\*Impact of Voting Systems on Diversity and Ballot Paper Wording\*](#) – Report of the Town Clerk submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2019
- [\*Aspirations for Member Representation by 2021 and 2025 and voluntary Members' Diversity Charter\*](#) – Report of the Town Clerk submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2019
- [\*Unconscious Bias Training and Nomenclature\*](#) – Report of the Town Clerk submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2019

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