

Governance Review: Member Engagement Sessions
Competitiveness: Session 1
1 December 2020

Notes of Discussion

Present

Sheriff Christopher Hayward (in the Chair)	Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Randall Anderson	Alderman Greg Jones
Deputy John Bennett	Shravan Joshi
Peter Bennett	Alderman Vincent Keaveny
Alderman Sir Charles Bowman	Alderwoman Susan Langley
Dep Keith Bottomley	Vivienne Littlechild
Dep David Bradshaw	Oliver Lodge
John Chapman	Deputy Edward Lord
Henry Colthurst	Alderman Ian Luder
James de Sausmarez	Deputy Robert Merrett
Mary Durcan	Alderman & Sheriff Prof. Michael Mainelli
Alderman Sir Peter Estlin	Deputy Brian Mooney
Dep Kevin Everett	Barbara Newman
Helen Fentimen	Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley
Marianne Fredericks	John Petrie
Alderman John Garbutt	Deputy Henry Pollard
Alderman Sir Roger Gifford	Stephen Quilter
Alderman Alison Gowman	Ruby Sayed
Alderman Prem Goyal	John Scott
Alderman David Graves	Ian Seaton
Alderman Tim Hailes	Oliver Sells
Deputy Tom Hoffman	James Tumbridge
Michael Hudson	Alderman Sir David Wootton
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney	Dawn Wright
Deputy Wendy Hyde	

Introduction

Sheriff Hayward, in the Chair, thanked Members for joining today's session. He noted that the Governance Review would affect all aspects of the City Corporation's governance and all Members as a consequence; it was, therefore, imperative that any implementation reflected the view of the Court, and that all Members had the opportunity to feed in their views on particular elements. These informal engagement sessions were the first part of that process.

He emphasised that the purpose of today's session was not to make decisions and that there were no preconceptions heading into these sessions, which were all about listening and ensuring that the views of Members on particular issues were known before any formal stage of considerations.

To that end, a short factual summary paper had been circulated, together with the relevant extract of the Review itself, to try and help focus discussion.

Recommendations: Members' Comments and Observations

Members then proceeded to debate the various recommendations.

Paragraphs 189-194: Competitiveness Committee

- Members were agreed on the importance of a specific vehicle or body to oversee the competitiveness agenda, with several commenting on the fundamental significance of this area of activity for the City Corporation and City of London, particularly post-COVID. However, there were a number of differing views expressed as to how this could be taken forward.
- The importance of focusing on the desired outcome (i.e. the promotion of the Business City) was stressed by many as being fundamental to taking this work forward, with it observed that any body should be formulated in such a way as to achieve this effectively.
- Several individuals emphasised the need for firm and robust Terms of Reference, as well as intended outputs, to be expressed so as to guide the committee appropriately and ensure focused efforts.
- A Member suggested that the key to success would be to find a way to engage the expertise and knowledge of relevant Members, whether Commoner or Alderman, whilst also ensuring that any body or forum was attractive to externals and facilitated their effective contribution.
- A large number of attendees also spoke to emphasise the need to attract top-level external business figures in a way which made them feel their time was well spent and productive; any new committee / forum / entity to be established would need to be structured in such a way as to facilitate this. This could well require such a body having a majority of external members or participants, to ensure it had the credibility to attract top-level external business figures.
- It was also emphasised that, irrespective of decision-making powers or status, the body must be produce meaningful outputs and contribute to the Lord Mayor and Policy Chair's messaging and efforts; it could not be left to become a "talking shop".
- One Member suggested that Lisvane's recommendations should be adopted wholesale and that the Court should carefully consider the structure Lisvane had put forward; should Members wish to take a different approach then they needed to be able to rationalise why.
- The comment at paragraph 185 in relation to capitalising on expertise within the Court, as well as outside knowledge, was highlighted as being particularly important: a suitable mechanism to achieve this would need to be employed.
- A Members observed the current committee structures made it difficult for Members with suitable expertise to participate, especially where one was not a Member of Policy & Resources; a suggestion of a more informal approach which allowed for greater Member engagement on suitable topics would be welcome.

- The proposition that any entity should be chaired by the Chair of Policy & Resources, with the Chair of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen as Deputy Chair, was broadly supported. However, there was one suggestion that a past Lord Mayor might be a more suitable Chair.
- Several Members emphasised the importance of democratic oversight and accountability in any arrangement, suggesting that the body should, therefore, be a formal part of the governance structure (i.e. committee or sub-committee) to give it legitimacy.
- One Member suggested that the new body should be a standalone committee, commenting that Policy and Resources had too broad a remit to give this area sufficient focus. However, the new entity would need to be tightly focused on its purpose and not exceed its brief or remit. It was also stressed that the group should not just focus on Financial and Professional Services, but include other areas such as the Tech sector, too.
- Another Member suggested that a more helpful approach might be to revamp the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Committee (PRED), which should take on more of an economic development focus, as well as looking at public relations. This refreshed body could give greater focus and oversight to both Communications and Innovation & Growth, without the need for any new body. It was added that the sub-committee could then establish a series of specialist working groups to bring in external expertise and feed into it, e.g. one for FinTech, one for insurance, and so on.
- However, a large number of Members stressed the fundamental importance of the body being both agile and flexible, suggesting that this was not realistic within the formal committee confines and advocating that an informal place outside of the committee structure would be better in achieving these ends.
- It was argued that key business leaders would not wish to join a formal City Committee or sub-committee where they would have to jump through a number of bureaucratic hoops. Many Members urged the necessity of making participation in any body as easy as possible for senior business and sector leads.
- A Member observed that there was currently a lack of expert advice to inform decision-making, with it suggested that this body could act in a manner akin to a sort of internal think-tank.
- It was also suggested that such an informal forum would pose no challenge to democratic legitimacy in this way, as it would act simply as an advisory forum and that decision-making would continue to sit within the formal structures, with elected Members accountable for decisions and actions.
- Another Member commented that the organisation already had too many committees and that adding another formal committee specifically for this area would risk making the Corporation appear to be a trade body for financial and professional services. Instead, an advisory body of City leaders, offering wisdom to the Policy and Resources Committee, would be preferable.

- Supporting discussion around a more informal body, a Member observed the importance of looking through a different prism in delivering this area of work, beyond what the “normal” approach would be through a traditional committee. There was a clear need to facilitate IG’s work much more effectively and deploy the Corporation’s knowledge and resources so as to create an ecosystem that allowed all businesses, including Financial and Professional Services, to thrive. It was widely recognised that the Corporation did not adequately leverage its own Members’ expertise, or draw in external expertise in a sufficiently nimble way, so a new approach was necessary. The Member expressed support for the idea of focused or breakout groups relating to individual disciplines or sectors, suggesting that a refreshed approach could also allow for much greater collaboration and coherent messaging, adding real weight to the work of the civic team.
- Multiple Members also stressed the need for flexibility and pace in establishing this body, arguing that an informal body should be established quickly and this could always be reviewed and refined, or even made into a formal committee if desirable, as time progressed.
- In terms of composition, several Members expressed support for the idea of a fixed group of core of permanent members, but with fluidity in relation to external or other participants, who could change according to the nature of discussion at any particular meeting. Sub-groups could also be established to look at specific issues or sub-sectors.
- It was observed that key sector or business figures were unlikely to have the time or inclination to join for wide-ranging debates or issues outside their area of focus; consequently, a way of inviting them to join for very specific discussions and items could be fruitful.
- One Member suggested that two different bodies might be necessary; one to act as the aforementioned informal forum to provide the advice and guidance piece, with a second to act as a formal and dedicated oversight body for the Innovation & Growth (IG) directorate. With reference to the former, it was suggested that this forum partly existed through the Lord Mayor’s City No.1 Breakfasts and the Member mooted the possibility of this being used as the basis for any new forum.
- Several Members also took the opportunity to comment that public relations in general did not receive sufficient attention across the Corporation, suggesting that it needed to be embedded throughout the organisation more effectively to achieve consistency and coherency of message and maximise impact.

Name of the Committee

- A large number of Members expressed the view that the proposed name for any such body (i.e. “Competitiveness Committee”) was not suitable and that an alternative was needed, irrespective of the formal status of said body.

- The word “competitiveness” in general was not felt to provide the right feel, with several other options proposed.
- Suggestions made included:
 - Professional Services
 - Business Support
 - Business Strategy Forum
 - Innovation & Growth
 - Strategy Innovation & Growth
 - Business City Focus Group

Hospitality (paragraph 191)

- There was a broad consensus that the role of the Hospitality Working Party should not be subsumed within the responsibilities of any new Competitiveness Committee or similar body.
- Members noted the distinction between the relatively few major set-piece dinners with a link to competitiveness issues, such as the Trade & Industry Dinner, and the broader swathe of hospitality offered by the City Corporation at a lower level and in other areas, such as culture, where it would be neither practical nor desirable for a Competitiveness Committee to have oversight.
- Notwithstanding this, it was suggested that the City Corporation would benefit from a more strategic approach to its hospitality activities and a wider review of the totality of offering.

Chair of Policy & Resources: Title (paragraphs 195-199)

- There was general support for the use of “Chair of Policy” or “Policy Chair” externally if this was considered to be helpful; however, some Members did urge that the “resources” element of the role (and the committee) not be forgotten internally.
- There was some debate in respect of the use of the term “leader”, with reference to comparative arrangements in London local authorities; ultimately, a significant majority of Members were opposed to the use of such nomenclature in the City Corporation, noting the significant distinction in roles and arrangements.

The Lord Mayor: Appointment Process (paragraphs 207-231)

- A Member suggested that the panel for the selection Mayoral candidates should be smaller and more focused.

- It was observed that financial support arrangements for candidates of more modest personal circumstances (para 224) had been introduced and in place for a few years now.
- A Member commented that they would support a proper examination of the role and selection process for Sheriffs, venturing that additional work should be undertaken with the Livery to identify the best possible candidates and encourage them to stand.

Sheriff Hayward thanked Members for their participation in the session and for their constructive contributions.

Governance Review: Member Engagement Sessions
Competitiveness: Session 2
1 December 2020

Notes of Discussion

Present

Sheriff Christopher Hayward (in the Chair)	Caroline Haines
Randall Anderson	Graeme Harrower
Alderman Sir Charles Bowman	Alderman Alastair King
Tijs Broeke	Alderman Ian Luder
Karina Dostalova	Alderman Bronek Masojada
Anne Fairweather	Barbara Newman
Sophie Fernandes	Jeremy Simons
Marianne Fredericks	Deputy James Thomson
Alderman Prem Goyal	Mark Wheatley
Alderman David Graves	Alderman Sir David Wootton
Alderman Tim Hailes	

Introduction

Sheriff Hayward, in the Chair, thanked Members for joining the evening's session. He noted that the Governance Review would affect all aspects of the City Corporation's governance and all Members as a consequence; it was, therefore, imperative that any implementation reflected the view of the Court, and that all Members had the opportunity to feed in their views on particular elements. These informal engagement sessions were the first part of that process.

He emphasised that the purpose of the evening's session was not to make decisions and that there were no preconceptions heading into these sessions, which were all about listening and ensuring that the views of Members on particular issues were known before any formal stage of considerations.

To that end, a short factual summary paper had been circulated, together with the relevant extract of the Review itself, to try and help focus discussion. He also noted that a number of Members had been present at the day's earlier session and asked that those who had not attended previously be afforded the opportunity to contribute first.

Recommendations: Members' Comments and Observations

Members then proceeded to debate the various recommendations.

Paragraphs 189-194: Competitiveness Committee

- Members referenced discussion in the earlier session around the need to think differently about how this body was constituted, with several echoing the importance of it being agile, dynamic and flexible. All efforts should be made to attract top-level external business leaders to participate and to leverage Members' experience and expertise, and it was felt that a more informal

advisory group or forum would achieve this more effectively than a formal committee.

- Other Members spoke to support the informal approach, agreeing that it would be challenging to get top-level business leaders to sign up to serving on a formal committee and all that came with it. Equally, they would not wish to serve on a sub-committee or something seen as lacking in status.
- The importance of flexibility was emphasised, so any group could adjust focus quickly to the relevant business focus at the right time.
- In terms of composition, it was suggested that any core group of Members should constitute a balance of the two Courts but that the focus should be on outcomes and the right people, rather than be diverted by having to have specific limitations on the numbers of Commoners or Aldermen and so on.
- A Member expressed concern that the distillation of comments through the Fraser and Lisvane reviews could lead to the Corporation losing wider sight of City businesses outside the FPS sector, urging that other sectors and SMEs not be forgotten, as they were crucial components of the City. Other Members echoed this, noting that the group would need to look at business in its wider sense in the City, not just FPS.
- A Member observed that the credibility of any new committee / entity would be essential in attracting the very best candidates, arguing that a majority of independent external members would be necessary to achieve this.
- Other Members expressed a note of caution around targeting top-level figures only, observing that constructive challenge and important innovative thinking could come from those with involvement at a lower level or in less traditional sectors. The diversity of the body should be taken extremely seriously, with a range of ages and backgrounds being essential in offering diversity of thought and different perspectives in debate.
- Following some discussion as to accountability, it was clarified that any informal body would be advisory to Policy & Resources, which would retain responsibility for policy-setting; this group would provide a means of more focused expertise and time to inform Policy & Resource's decisions and make them more effective.
- A Member expressed a fundamental challenge in relation to the City's support of promotion of FPS, arguing it was an extremely wealthy sector which could well afford to make its own case. They also questioned whether it was particularly suitable for a collection of part-time local politicians to be involved in this area, suggesting that the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee should consider this seriously and reflect on whether continued involvement was appropriate for the City Corporation, and whether the Corporation's resources might be more sensibly deployed in the interest of the public good.
- A Member reflected on their own experiences in deciding to stand for election to the City Corporation, commenting on the brand of the City of London generally and the unique position the Corporation was in to be able to promote

the City of London around the world, with its infrastructure and convening power already in place to achieve a meaningful difference. They added that the creation of a great municipal environment was entirely complementary to facilitating an optimal business environment, as the former attracted businesses whose commerce in turn provided for revenue and support to further improve the municipal setting.

- Noting the range of interests and professional backgrounds on the Court, as well as the broad responsibilities of the City Corporation beyond those of a normal local authority, a Member suggested that there would always be a difference of opinion around appropriate foci and a challenge to accommodate the differing interests of so many Members. It was suggested that the informal engagement approach that this new competitiveness entity could provide might represent a helpful guide in the longer-term as to how one might respond to these competing challenges.
- A Member expressed some concern about how any potential conflict of opinion between the Court and any advisory body might be managed; for instance, if the FPS sector was advocating for engagement with a particular nation or regime that the Court of Common Council was not comfortable with. The rejection of the advisory group's clear recommendations could cause reputational difficulties in the longer term and this was a dynamic that would need to be given serious consideration.
- With reference to the broader concept of "competitiveness", a Member observed that this must include culture in some way, given its integral status as part of the overall attractiveness of the City to business. It was urged that this not be forgotten.

Hospitality (paragraph 191)

- Members agreed that the role of the Hospitality Working Party should not be subsumed within the responsibilities of any new Competitiveness body as HWP's role was much wider; however, there was undoubtedly more that could be done in relation to key set-piece events, as well as more generally, to make hospitality more strategic and effective, including in relation to competitiveness.

Sheriff Hayward thanked Members for their participation in the session and for their constructive contributions.