

Committee: Standards Committee	Date: 16 th May 2014
Subject: Standards Committee – Terms of Reference and Frequency of meetings	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
<u>Summary</u>	
<p>1. The purpose of this report is for the Standards Committee to consider its Terms of Reference, the terms of reference of its sub committees and its frequency of meetings. The Committee is also asked to receive meeting dates for the remainder of 2014 and 2015.</p> <p>2. Details of the composition of the Standards Committee and its terms of reference are set out below.</p>	
<u>Recommendations</u>	
<p>3. It is recommended that:-</p> <p>(a) Members note the amendments to the Standards Committee’s Terms of Reference (Appendix 1);</p> <p>(b) Members note the frequency of the Committee’s meetings; and</p> <p>(c) Members note the scheduled meeting dates for 2014/15.</p>	

Main Report

4. This report sets out the terms of reference and composition of the Standards Committee, including the Committee’s Co-opted Members and the Independent Persons.
5. The Committee is also asked to note the frequency of its meetings and the meeting dates scheduled for the 2014/ 2015 municipal year, as set out in paragraph 14.

Standards Committee –Terms of Reference

6. The Standard’s Committee’s Terms of Reference, as agreed by the Court of Common Council at its meeting on 1st May 2014 are set out at **Appendix 1**.

Standards Committee – Composition

7. The Standard’s Committee’s composition, as agreed by the Court of Common Council at its meeting on 1st May 2014 is:-
 - one Alderman appointed by the Court of Aldermen

- seven Members elected by the Court of Common Council, at least one of whom shall have fewer than five years' service on the Court at the time of their appointment
 - four representatives (with no voting rights) who must not be Members of the Court of Common Council or employees of the City of London Corporation.
8. None of the appointed shall serve on the Committee for more than two terms, a maximum of eight years in total.
 9. Three independent persons are also appointed pursuant to the Localism Act 2011. As in previous years, it is proposed that Independent Persons be invited to attend all future meetings of the Committee (in an observer capacity).
 10. The quorum consists of three Members, at least one of whom must be a non-Common Council Member.

Standards Committee – 2013/2014 Membership

11. The Standard's Committee's membership in 2014/201, as agreed by the Court of Common Council at its meeting on 1st May 2014, is as follows:-

Alderman

Alderman Julian Malins Q.C.

Common Councilmen

Charles Edward Lord, OBE, JP

Nigel Kenneth Challis (*for three years*)

Michael Hudson (*for two years*)

Oliver Arthur Wynlayne Lodge, T.D., B.Sc

Virginia Rounding

Thomas Charles Christopher Sleigh

Non-Common Council Members

Judith Barnes (appointed for a four year term expiring in December 2017)

Felicity Lusk (appointed for a four year term expiring in December 2017)

[Two vacancies]

12. The Corporation's Independent Persons are Neil Asten, Anju Sanehi and Chris Taylor (appointed pursuant to the Localism Act 2011).
13. In respect of the current vacancies for two Co-opted Members, these vacancies have been advertised and will be appointed to in the normal manner over the coming months, taking into account the revised Selection Panel arrangements which were approved by the Court of Common Council in March 2014. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Standards Committee (or their representatives) now serve on the selection panel with the Chief Commoner and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen (or their representatives) for the purposes of interviewing candidates and making recommendations to the Court of Common Council.

Meetings of the Standards Committee

14. Historically the Committee has met between two to three times per year, although more meetings were scheduled in 2012/13 to accommodate discussions about the Localism agenda. In 2013, the Committee confirmed that 3 scheduled meetings of the Committee per annum were sufficient. On that basis the following meeting dates are confirmed for the remainder of the 2014/2015 municipal year:
 - Friday, 24th October 2014 (11.30am)
 - Friday, 30th January 2015 (11.30am)
15. The following meeting dates in 2015/16 are also confirmed:
 - Friday, 15th May 2015 (11.30am)
 - Friday, 2nd October 2015 (11.30am)
16. It is further proposed that where there is no business, and with the Chairman's consent, meetings may be cancelled. Where meetings of the Sub Committees (Dispensations and Assessment) are required, these will be scheduled on an ad hoc basis throughout the year.

Standards Committee – Sub Committees' terms of reference

17. Dispensations Sub (Standards) Committee

Established on 13th September 2013, the principal function of the Dispensations Sub Committee is to consider requests for a dispensation from elected Members and Co-opted Members to speak and/or vote on a specific matter(s), in-line with the City of London Corporation's criterion. Consequently, the Sub Committee will meet on an ad hoc basis as and when requests for a dispensation are received.

18. The Terms of Reference are:

- a) The Dispensations Sub Committee is established to determine written requests for dispensations from Members or Co-opted Members to take part in any discussion and/or vote on a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest in accordance with section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- b) Upon receipt of a written request for a dispensation, a meeting of the Sub Committee will be convened (unless a meeting of the Standards Committee is scheduled to take place within a reasonable timeframe), to consider the details of the request and will then do one of the following:-
 - (i) grant a dispensation (in whole or in part) for a specified period not exceeding four years;
 - (ii) reject the request for a dispensation; or

- (iii) seek further information regarding the request ahead of further consideration at a newly convened meeting, or in accordance with the City Corporation's urgency provisions (Standing Order No. 41).
- c) The Town Clerk will advise the Member seeking a dispensation of the Sub Committee's decision upon the conclusion of the meeting and will retain a list of action taken in respect of all written requests considered by the Sub Committee.
- d) The Sub Committee will consist of any three elected Members (voting) and one Co-opted Member (non-voting).
- e) The quorum shall consist of any three elected Members.

19. **Dispensations Sub (Standards) Committee – Composition**

As above, the Sub Committee will consist of any three elected Members (voting) and one Co-opted Member (non-voting) to be drawn from the membership of the Standards Committee.

20. **Meetings of the Dispensations Sub Committee**

The Standards Committee is currently scheduled to meet 4 times per year. Where requests for a dispensation are received in advance of a scheduled meeting, these requests will be considered by the Committee. When a request for a dispensation is received and where meetings of the Standards Committee are not scheduled to meet within a reasonable timeframe, a meeting of the Dispensations Sub Committee will be convened.

21. **Allegations of breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct - Assessment, Hearing and Appeal Sub Committees**

The Localism Act 2011 requires the City of London Corporation to have in place arrangements under which written allegations of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct can be investigated and decisions on those allegations taken. These arrangements apply to both Members and Co-opted Members.

22. In order to carry out its functions efficiently and effectively, and to avoid any conflicts of interest, the Standards Committee has established three separate Sub-Committees for the different stages of the complaints process, being Assessment, Hearing and Appeal Sub-Committees. The terms of reference for each of the sub committees is set out at **Appendix 2**.

Recommendations

23. Members are asked to:
- (a) note the Standards Committee's Terms of Reference (Appendix 1);
 - (b) note the frequency of the Committee's meetings; and
 - (c) note the scheduled meeting dates for 2014/15.

Background Papers:-

- Appointment of Members on Committees Court report (White Paper), May 2014.
- “How complaints submitted to the City of London’s Standards Committee will be dealt with.” (November 2012).

Appendices:-

- **Appendix 1** – Standards Committee’s Terms of Reference, as approved by the Court of Common Council on 1st May 2014.
- **Appendix 2** - The terms of reference for the Standards Committee’s sub committees: Assessment, Hearing and Appeal Sub Committees.

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