

Committee: Standards Committee	Date: 20th February 2015
Subject: Standards Committee – Terms of Reference and Frequency of meetings	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <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, ahead of submission of the White Paper to the Court of Common Council on 23rd April 2015. The Committee is also asked to receive meeting dates for the remainder of 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>2. Details of the composition of the Standards Committee and its terms of reference are set out below.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>3. It is recommended that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Members consider the Standards Committee's Terms of Reference (Appendix 1); (b) Members consider the frequency of the Committee's meetings; and (c) Members note the scheduled meeting dates for the remainder of 2015 and 2016. 	

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 remainder of 2015 and 2016, as set out in paragraph 15.

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**. Subject to any views of the Committee, the Terms of Reference will be submitted to the Court of Common Council for approval on 23rd April 2015 ahead of the start of the new municipal year.

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 or 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 2014/2015, as agreed by the Court of Common Council at its meeting on 1st May 2014, was as follows:-

Alderman

Alderman Julian Malins Q.C.

Common Councilmen

Nigel Kenneth Challis (*for three years*)

Michael Hudson (*for two years*)

Deputy Alistair John Naisbitt King

Oliver Arthur Wynlayne Lodge, T.D.

Charles Edward Lord, OBE, JP

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)

Mark Greenburgh and Dan Large were subsequently appointed in October 2014 as Co-opted Members of the Committee for four year terms to expire in October 2018.

12. The Corporation's Independent Persons are Neil Asten, Anju Sanehi and Chris Taylor (appointed pursuant to the Localism Act 2011).

Meetings of the Standards Committee

13. In 2013, the Committee confirmed that 3 scheduled meetings of the Committee per annum were sufficient. On that basis the following meeting dates were previously confirmed for the remainder of 2015 and 2016:
 - Friday, 15th May 2015 (11.30am)
 - Friday, 2nd October 2015 (11.30am)
 - Friday, 29th January 2016 (11.30am)
 - Friday, 13th May 2016 (11.30am)
 - Friday, 7th October 2016 (11.30am)
14. Where there is no business, and with the Chairman's consent, meetings may be cancelled.
15. 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

16. 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.

17. 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) to be drawn from the membership of the Standards Committee.
- e) The quorum shall consist of any three elected Members.

18. 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.

19. 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 are set out at **Appendix 2**.

Recommendations

20. Members are asked to:
- (a) consider the Standards Committee's Terms of Reference (Appendix 1);
 - (b) consider the frequency of the Committee's meetings; and
 - (c) note the scheduled meeting dates for 2015/16.

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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