

FREEDOM APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 February 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Freedom Applications Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 3.30 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Sir David Wootton (Chairman)
Mark Boleat (Ex-Officio Member)
Simon Duckworth
Hugh Morris (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Charlotte Taffel	-	Town Clerk's Department
Peter Kane	-	Chamberlain
Michael Cogher	-	Comptroller and City Solicitor
Paul Double	-	City Remembrancer
Murray Craig	-	Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Alderman Peter Hewitt and Michael Welbank.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

4. OUTSTANDING REFERENCES

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk detailing the outstanding references from the previous meeting and action taken to date.

Matters Arising

The Chairman requested that the updated sets of Guidance, for both Members and Livery Companies, be dated to ensure the latest versions were in use.

A Member questioned how the new Guidance would be circulated and accessible to Members. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the

Guidance would be part of the new E-Guide, which had been circulated to all Members of the Common Council which will be circulated every quarter.

The Chairman sought to raise the Committee's concerns about an application for the freedom with the nominator.

RECEIVED.

5. CHAMBERLAIN'S COURT EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SURVEY

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain on the Chamberlain's Court Equality and Diversity Survey.

The Committee questioned what action could be taken to improve the diversity of those applying for the Freedom, and whether there were any obstacles to applicants that could discourage them from applying. It was also questioned if enough was being done in terms of positive communication and messaging surrounding the Freedom.

A Member suggested that Freedom by Patrimony could be a potential issue in relation to both the diversity of those applying for the Freedom, as well as issues of perception. Discussion ensued on the methodology used by Livery Companies with regard to Freedom by Patrimony.

The Livery composition was a clear indicator of equality and diversity, and the Committee agreed that this was an area that the Livery Committee should be actively promoting. It was noted that the Equality and Diversity Survey had been to the Livery Committee previously and it was proposed that both the Freedom Applications Committee and the Livery Committee could work together to encourage a more positive and open message and method regarding Freedom applications to improve equality and diversity.

The Committee suggested a number of ways that equality and diversity could be improved, for example working with City Academies and Schools, as well as considering sponsorships for example with Christ's Hospital.

The Committee agreed that the Clerk to the Chamberlains Court would investigate options to improve equality and diversity in applications for the Freedom, and to raise the issue with the Livery Committee to address any barriers to applying for the Freedom.

RESOLVED – That:-

- 1) The Clerk to the Chamberlains Court would investigate options of improving equality and diversity in applications for the Freedom with City Academies, Schools and sponsorships; and
- 2) The Clerk to the Chamberlains Court would raise the issue of improving equality and diversity with the Livery Committee.

6. FREEDOM APPLICATIONS AND CONVICTIONS

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Comptroller and City Solicitor regarding Freedom Applications and Convictions.

The Committee noted there were no means to assess whether potential applicants to the Freedom had criminal convictions, and discussion ensued on the discretion of the Committee in dealing with such cases. The Committee agreed that such applications should be considered on a case by case basis, and to operate with fairness and openness.

The Committee agreed that the Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court would amend the Freedom application form to ask applicants whether they have been convicted, unspent, and if so, to provide future details. The Committee agreed that the Comptroller and City Solicitor would produce guidance to accompany the application form with regard to criminal convictions.

RESOLVED – That:-

- 1) The Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court amend the Freedom application form to include a section asking applicants whether they have been convicted, unspent, and if so, to provide future details; and
- 2) The Comptroller and City Solicitor produce guidance to accompany the application form with regard to criminal convictions.

7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

9. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

10. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no non-public questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was no non-public urgent business.

12. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

13. VETTING OF CANDIDATES AND POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO THE REPUTATIONAL IMAGE OF THE CITY OF LONDON

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain on the vetting of candidates.

RECEIVED.

14. FREEDOM BY SPECIAL NOMINATION - COMPOSITE LIST OF POTENTIAL RECIPIENTS

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain regarding recipients of the Freedom by Special nomination.

RECEIVED.

The meeting closed at 4.20 pm

Chairman

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