

Committee: Establishment Finance Resource Allocation	Date: 26 July 2017
Subject: Support for Committee Chairmen	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision
Report Author: Simon Murrells, Assistant Town Clerk	

Summary

1. Currently, only the Chief Commoner and the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee are in receipt of dedicated administrative (PA) and executive support including diary, meeting and secretarial management, provision and coordination of briefings and making transport arrangements etc. This is provided centrally by the Town Clerk's Department. From time-to-time, the Chairmen of other Committees require similar support, albeit not to the same degree, and this has customarily been provided by the service department relevant to the work in question.
2. There has been some discussion informally including most recently at a meeting of Members of the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and a Chairman's briefing session, over whether the support available to the Chairmen of several Committees through the rather ad-hoc arrangement with service departments is sufficient for their needs bearing in mind current day demands. This is particularly so for the Chairmen of the Planning and Transportation, Police, Establishment and Finance Committees.
3. This report seeks the views of Members on whether PA/executive support for the Chairmen of the Committees referred to above should be provided centrally in future and, if that is endorsed, to authorise an increase in the Town Clerk's local risk budget each year to cover the cost of two employees necessary to provide the service.
4. In addition, whilst the Mayoralty and Shrievalty receive a dedicated speechwriting service, no such facility is available to the Chairman of Policy & Resources or the Chief Commoner. The demands now placed on the Policy Chairman particularly, means that delivering speeches has become a regular, often daily, occurrence and there is need for specialist full-time support in this area for which there is no provision. If approved, the post would sit within the Communications Team, but work closely with the Committee and Members Services Team.
5. Finally, the Establishment Committee has identified the need for the current structure of the Committee and Member Services Team to be reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This will be carried out over the coming weeks. In

the meantime, a small adjustment to the help strengthen resilience within the team has been identified and a relatively modest additional sum would be required for this purpose. A further report will be submitted jointly by the Director of HR and the Assistant Town Clerk on the more substantive elements of the review in due course.

Recommendation: That the views of Members be sought on whether:

a) dedicated PA/executive support, should be provided centrally to City of London Corporation Committee Chairmen, principally for the Chairmen of the Planning and Transportation, Police, Establishment and Finance Committees;

b) a dedicated speechwriting service should be provided for the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee and the Chief Commoner;

c) subject to a and b above, the Finance Committee's approval be sought to increasing the Town Clerk's local risk budget by £170,000 each year from contingencies to cover the cost of the posts necessary to provide the services and to help strengthen resilience within the Committee and Member Services team, in advance of a request review of the structure of the team.

Main Report

Background

4. Over the years, the demands placed on the work of the Chief Commoner and the Policy Chairman have increased and, as a result, the office holders have required dedicated administrative (PA) and executive support to carry out their duties. This includes diary and secretarial management, provision and coordination of briefings, organising meetings and making transport arrangements etc.
5. This service is provided centrally by the Town Clerk's Department and there are two full-time members of staff involved in supporting the post-holders. These two posts also provide some modest associated committee management eg. clerking the Hospitality Working Party which is chaired by the Chief Commoner. Part of a further, senior post, is responsible for overall management. The posts all sit within the Committee and Member Services Team. It should also be noted that steps are being taken to provide dedicated speech writing support for the two principals as part of the service provided by the Director of Communication and his team.
6. The Chairmen of other Committees also require administrative support in carrying out their duties, including correspondence and organising meetings etc. Previously the extent of that work has meant that the department relevant to the work in question has helped to provide that service and has supported 'their' Chairman on an as and when required basis. However, the demands being placed on several of the Committee Chairmen are increasing and there has been

some informal discussion about the provision of dedicated centralised PA/executive support, particularly but not exclusively for the Chairmen of the Planning and Transportation, Police, Establishment and Finance Committees.

7. In addition, whilst the Mayoralty and Shrievalty receive a dedicated speechwriting service, no such facility is available to the Chairman of Policy & Resources or the Chief Commoner. The demands now placed on the Policy Chairman particularly, means that delivering speeches has become a regular, often daily, occurrence and there is need for specialist full-time support in this area for which there is currently no provision. The Director of Communications is concerned to ensure that the Policy Chairman and the Chief Commoner have a high level of professional support in this key area. Consideration has been given to whether speechwriting could be a shared service, utilising the posts supporting the Mayoralty and Shrievalty. However, there is concern over whether there would be sufficient capacity to provide a fully comprehensive service to each of the five principals involved and, on balance, it is felt that a post dedicated to the work of the Policy Chairman and the Chief Commoner, based at Guildhall, is the best way forward at this stage. Good communication and liaison between all speechwriters is essential to ensure consistent and effective messaging and that whoever represents the City Corporation speaks with one voice. The post of speechwriter would sit within the Communications Team.
8. Finally, at the Establishment Committee meeting on 19 June 2017, the operation and structure of the Town Clerk's Committee and Member Services Team was discussed and the view was expressed that it was time to look again at the operational model and review the effectiveness as the 'policy' function had practically disappeared and the 'committee' function took priority, and there was now limited support for Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen. In particular, Officers were asked to look at this in the context of establishing a career path for staff joining the Corporation, possibly as graduates, for whom work as a committee/policy officer could form part of their progression into non-specialist management roles.
9. It was agreed that the views of both Members and staff be sought and a report be brought back to a future meeting and the Town Clerk and Director of Human Resources were asked to report back to the Committee on the staffing resource concerns identified by Members.
10. This review will be carried out over the coming weeks. In the meantime, a small adjustment to help strengthen resilience within the team has been identified and a relatively modest additional sum would be required for this purpose.

Proposed Support

11. If Members are minded to endorse the provision of dedicated PA/executive support for Committee Chairmen, it is not envisaged that every Committee Chairman (there are 29 Chairmen of Grand Committees and only two members of staff are proposed) would benefit from a fully comprehensive PA service provided centrally. Departments would continue to provide a significant degree of

practical help and support for the relevant Chairman in most cases. However, where appropriate and subject to the demands of the service, occasional support would be provided to individual Chairmen centrally and this would have to be determined on a case-by-case basis. The service would principally be for supporting the work of the Chairmen of the Planning and Transportation, Police, Establishment and Finance Committees.

8. The cost of creating two PA posts and a post of speechwriter (subject to Job Evaluation) plus the cost of strengthening resilience within the Committee and Member Services Team would be £170,000 (including on-costs) and the Town Clerk's local risk budget would need to be increased to meet this additional and unanticipated expenditure on an on-going basis.

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