

MEMBERS PRIVILEGES SUB (POLICY AND RESOURCES) COMMITTEE

Friday, 12 January 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Members Privileges Sub (Policy and Resources)
Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 12
January 2018 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Wendy Mead (Chief Commoner) (Chairman)
Simon Duckworth
Ann Holmes
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Deputy Edward Lord
Deputy Catherine McGuinness (Ex-Officio Member)
John Scott (Ex-Officio Member)
Jeremy Simons
Michael Welbank

Officers:

Angela Roach	- Principal Committee and Members Services Manager
Tina Denis	- Executive Assistant, Town Clerk's Office
Scott Govan	- City Surveyor's Office

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Richard Regan.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 19 October 2017 were approved.

4. ACCESS TO GUILDHALL CLUB AREAS

The Sub-Committee considered a resolution from the House Committee of Guildhall Club proposing that, in terms of access to the Members' Room area, in addition to current Members, past Lord Mayors and past Chief Commoners who were no longer on the Court, access to that area should be extended to

include past Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee who were no longer on the Court. Members supported the suggestion.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee that, in addition to current Members, past Lord Mayors and past Chief Commoners who were no longer on the Court of Common Council, access to the Members Room area be extended to past Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee who were no longer on the Court.

5. BUSINESS CARDS IMPRINTED IN BRAILLE

The Sub-Committee considered a resolution from the Grand Committee asking it to consider whether business cards should be imprinted in braille.

A number of Members commented that whilst they had never had cause to have braille available, they would have no objection to business cards being produced in that manner. However, the approach to this should be measured and that it should be undertaken where there is a clear business need only and not introduced across the board. It was also suggested that the wording imprinted should be generic for all users.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee, business cards should be imprinted in braille where there is a clear business case for doing so only and that consideration be given to the wording on the card being generic for all users.

6. PROVISION OF LOCKERS FOR CHAIRMEN AND THEIR DEPUTIES

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor concerning the provision of a limited number of lockers in the Members small IT room on the mezzanine floor for Chairmen and, possibly their deputies, to store committee papers and small devices.

Members supported the provision of lockers based on option 1 – the purchase of 24 lockers fitted with key locks at an estimated cost of £700 and noted the alternative option included having lockers fitted with combination locks at a cost of £1400. It was also suggested that two master keys should be made available, one held by the Security Desk and the other by the Committee Desk.

A Member asked for a confidential waste bin to also be placed in the room.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee that a limited number of lockers be provided for the use of chairmen (and/or their deputies) in the Members small IT room on the mezzanine floor and that this be based on Option 1 - the provision of 24 lockers fitted with key locks at an estimated cost of £700.

7. **PROPOSED CHIEF COMMONER'S HANDBOOK**

The Sub-Committee considered a paper prepared by Deputy Edward Lord on the possible introduction of a Chief Commoner's Handbook.

Members welcomed the introduction of a handbook on the role of the Chief Commoner and thanked Mr Lord for producing the first draft. The Sub-Committee considered each section in turn and during discussion, amongst other things, the following comments were made:-

- It was suggested that the final wording of the document be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chief Commoner and the Chief Commoner Elect for approval.
- The Chairman of Policy stated whilst she supported the production of the handbook, she was concerned at over-codifying activities. She suggested that further thought be given to certain aspects of the document to avoid confusion. She also suggested that the views of Director of Communications should be sought to ensure that the language used in parts was suitable for a public document.
- Members also questioned the reference to backbenchers; the level of refreshments to be provided and whether it was necessary to include a section on consorts;
- It was agreed that a revised version of the handbook which took on board the comments made this day should be brought back to the Sub-Committee for further consideration prior to the meeting of the Grand Committee on 22 February, having been considered by relevant officers in more detail.

The Chairman of Policy referred to the different sizes of the overnight accommodation currently available to the Chief Commoner and the Chairman of Policy. The position of Policy Chairman had a five-year tenure and a high volume of work which resulted in the office holder having to spend considerable time at Guildhall. She pointed out that she lived relatively close and found the flat currently provided perfectly adequate. However, future policy chairmen who lived further afield might need to base themselves principally at Guildhall during the week. She therefore questioned whether thought should be given to switching around the accommodation of the two office holders (once her own term had finished) to provide the larger space to the policy chairman. Detailed discussion ensued on the provision of accommodation and whilst it was accepted that the current facility available to the Chairman of Policy was small for a post holder who needed to use it as a week time base, it was agreed that it should be examined to ensure that it was comparable to that offered to the Chief Commoner rather than contemplating any reallocation.

RESOLVED – that:-

1. a revised version of the handbook be submitted to the Sub-Committee and that a further meeting be convened to take place to consider it before the February meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee; and
 2. it be recommended to the Grand Committee that the overnight accommodation currently available to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee be reviewed with a view to it being comparable to that offered to the Chief Commoner.
8. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

Chief Commoners' Pictures

Reference was made to the Chief Commoner's pictures located on the third floor and it was noted that the picture of one of the past Chief Commoners, Christopher Mitchell, had completely faded and needed to be replaced.

RESOLVED – That the Town Clerk's office be requested to look in to replacing the picture of Mr Mitchell.

Use of Chairmen's Meeting Rooms

Reference was made to an incident concerning the use of Chairman's Room 1. A Member who was present at a previous meeting in Chairman's Room 1 explained that the room had been booked by a Chairman for a small City Corporation meeting as it required the use of a dial-in facility. It was noted that the committee rooms did not offer such a facility and therefore it was the only room the Chairman could use at that time. However, on the day he had been asked to relocate to another room by another Chairman because it was not an appropriate use of the room.

It was noted that the Surveyor's Office was looking at a project to upgrade meeting room facilities to include appropriate technology and it was suggested that this also include the rooms in the committee room area on the 2nd Floor of the West Wing.

RESOLVED – That the City Surveyor be requested to include the rooms in the committee room area on the 2nd Floor of the West Wing in the project looking at the upgrade of meeting room facilities.

Overnight Accommodation Keys

It was suggested that consideration be given to dispensing with keys for unlocking these rooms and that the system be made more efficient with the introduction of a Cotag system.

RESOLVED – That the City Surveyor be requested to consider dispensing with a key system to gain entry to these rooms and to instead extend the Cotag system.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 10.50am

Chairman

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