

Committee: Barbican Residential Committee	Date 12 December 2011	Item no. 9
Subject: Review Of Committee Arrangements (Quorum)		
Report of: Town Clerk		Public For Decision
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to review the number of non-resident Members required to meet a quorum (of 5) for the Barbican Residential Committee. This has been an intermittent problem for the Committee since 2007.</p> <p>The constitution for the Barbican Residential Committee is as follows :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 Members who are non- residents of the Barbican Estate – elected by the Court of Common Council • Three members nominated by each of the following wards: Aldersgate; Cripplegate Within and Cripplegate Without • The Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Community and Children’s Service Committee (ex-officio) <p>Since April 2011, the Committee has carried 5 non-resident vacancies (out of a possible 11). Both the June and September 2011 meetings were inquorate and a Special Meeting had to be called in October 2011.</p> <p>The Court of Common Council on 1 December 2011 will receive a recommendation to appoint to 2 of the vacancies but whilst the Committee is still carrying 3 vacancies, it retains a higher than desirable risk of being inquorate.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the Committee reduces the number of non-resident Members required to meet a quorum from 5 to 3 Members. This will be subject to the concurrence of the Court of Common Council, at its April 2012 Meeting and be subject to a review after 12 months.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. The Barbican Residential Committee requires a quorum of 5 non-resident Members. The Committee has been carrying 5 vacancies (out of a possible 11 non-resident Members) since April 2011 and therefore has an available pool of just 6 non-resident Members. This has left the Committee vulnerable and both June and September's meetings were inquorate.
2. The Committee has considered reviewing the quorum on various occasions during the last three years, as set out below:

8 December 2008 – following inquorate meetings on 10 December 2007, 14 April 2008 and 22 September 2008, the Committee supported a reduction to 3 non-resident Members, effective from after the April 2009 Court of Common Council Meeting.

26 January 2009 – following an influx of new Members, expected in April 2009, the Committee agreed to hold any decision (to reduce the quorum) in abeyance for 12 months. This would be revisited early in 2010, should poor attendance continue to blight the operation of the Committee.

29 March 2010 – the Town Clerk reported good attendance over the past year and the Committee resolved to defer consideration of the quorum for 12 months.

28 March 2011 – following continued good attendance, the Committee resolved to keep the quorum at 5 non-resident Members.

Current Position

3. Since April 2011, the Committee has carried 5 non-resident vacancies, out of a possible 11. The meetings on 20 June and 26 September 2011 were inquorate and a Special Meeting had to be called for 6 October 2011.

4. At the Special Meeting on 6 October, the Committee discussed the need to review the quorum and it was agreed that a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.
5. On 1 December 2011, the Court of Common Council will receive a recommendation to fill 2 of the 5 non-resident vacancies, which should go some way towards increasing the likelihood of reaching a quorum. However, until all 5 vacancies are filled, future meetings might still be at risk; compromising the timeliness of the Committee's decision making powers. Any decisions reached would be delayed, subject to ratification at subsequent or special meetings, or the use of urgency procedures would increase.

Options

6. If Members are concerned that the remaining 3 vacancies might not be filled in the near future, they should take a decision now to reduce the quorum to 3, with effect from the April 2012 Court of Common Council. The Court will consider this as part of their Annual Appointments to Committees. The decision can be reviewed in 12 months, by which time the remaining vacancies might have been filled and a quorum of 3 might no longer be necessary.

Conclusion

Until all 5 vacancies are filled, future meetings might be at risk of being inquorate and this will compromise the timeliness of the Committee's decision making powers. Given the intermittent nature of this problem and the likelihood of the remaining 3 vacancies not being filled in the near future, reducing the quorum to 3 would be prudent. This decision can be revisited in 12 months, by which time the vacancies might have been filled and a quorum of 3 might no longer be necessary.

Contact: Julie Mayer
Town Clerk's Department
020 7 332 1410
Julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk