

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 9 April 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held at Guildhall, EC2 on Tuesday, 9 April 2024 at 12.45 pm

Present

Members:

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| Deputy Henry Colthurst (Chairman) | Michael Hudson |
| Deputy Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman) | Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney |
| Deputy Rehana Ameer | Deputy Elizabeth King BEM JP |
| Brendan Barns | Deputy Paul Martinelli |
| Nicholas Bensted-Smith | Catherine McGuinness |
| Alderman Professor Emma Edhem | Eamonn Mullally |
| Alderman Sir Peter Estlin | Hugh Selka |
| Steve Goodman OBE | James St John Davis |

Officers:

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|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ian Thomas, CBE | - Town Clerk and Chief Executive |
| Caroline Al-Beyerty | - Chamberlain |
| Michael Cogher | - Comptroller and City Solicitor |
| Paul Wilkinson | - City Surveyor |
| Sonia Virdee | - Chamberlain's Department |
| Daniel Peattie | - Chamberlain's Department |
| Genine Whitehorne | - Chamberlain's Department |
| Joe Dromey | - Innovation & Growth |
| Daniel O'Byrne | - Innovation and Growth |
| Ben Dunleavy | - Town Clerk's Department |

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Keith Bottomley, Aaron D'Souza, Deputy Christopher Hayward, Alderman Tim Levene, Deputy Andrien Meyers, Paul Singh, Tom Sleight, Deputy Sir Michael Snyder, Deputy James Thomson, James Tumbridge and Mark Wheatley.

Shahnan Bakth, Benjamin Murphy and Philip Woodhouse observed the meeting virtually.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 20 February 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

4. **ACTION TRACKER**

Members received a report of the Town Clerk setting out outstanding actions from previous meetings.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

5. **FORWARD PLANS**

a) **Finance Committee's Forward Plan**

Members received a report of the Chamberlain providing the Committee's forward plan.

RESOLVED – That the Committee notes the report.

b) **Efficiency and Performance Working Party's Forward Plan**

Members received a report of the Chamberlain providing the Efficiency and Performance Working Party's forward plan.

During discussion, Members requested that officers consider the structuring of the Working Party's work programme which would be updated for the next meeting.

6. **DRAFT PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE PROJECTS AND PROCUREMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the Projects and Performance Sub-Committee meeting held on 12 February 2024 be noted.

7. **PROJECT AND PROCUREMENT SUB-COMMITTEE COMPOSITION**

Members received a report of the Town Clerk concerning the Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee.

The Chairman commended the proposals in the report, and hoped that Members would agree the composition, for appointment in May. Members also noted that officers would be exploring changes to the Sub-Committee's reporting threshold in the coming year.

The Chairman also suggested that the Sub-Committee should meet three weeks before the Finance Committee.

A Member noted that the Sub-Committee would have two Members appointed by the Finance Committee on the basis of skill sets, and asked whether the appointment of External Members should also be considered. In reply, the Chairman said that he was open to exploring this at a later date.

RESOLVED, that – Members

- a) Approve the proposed revisions to the composition of the Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee for appointment in May.

b) Endorse the proposed scheduling of the Sub-Committee to meet three weeks before the Finance Committee.

8. **CENTRAL LONDON WORKS - ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDING AND INCREASE IN CONTRACT VALUE**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Innovation and Growth, concerning the Central London Works Programme.

RESOLVED, that – Members approve:

a) The signing of an addendum to the Finance and Costings Framework with DWP to enable the receipt of this £2.5m.

b) Increasing the contract value of Central London Works by £2.5m.

9. **SPRING 2024 BUDGET - BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS**

Members received a report of the Chamberlain concerning the Spring 2024 Budget.

Members noted that over three-quarters of London boroughs had provisionally applied for approval to implement the second-homes premium in the 2025/26 financial year.

During discussion, some Members felt that some of the wording in the report's summary could be seen as overly political. However, other Members felt that it was appropriate, noting the City Corporation's position and the lack of support it was seeing in some of its own services. The Chamberlain informed Members that, given her responsibilities as a Section 151 Officer, she had a responsibility to reflect views on the financial position of the City Corporation and local government funding to Members and that the Secretary of State had consulted on the local government settlement, expecting feedback.

A Member requested that further thought be given to how the wider Court was presented with the information on the decisions that would be required by the City's financial position.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

10. **CHAMBERLAIN'S DEPARTMENTAL RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Chamberlain concerning departmental risk management.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

11. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk which provided information of action taken by the Town Clerk since the last meeting of the Committee.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee of a further decision which had been taken. The Town Clerk had approved the reallocation of Finance Committee

contingency from City Fund and City's Estates £159.5k across each fund to address an overspend of £319k for the financial year 2023/24 within the Chamberlains/DITS Division. The overspend could not be addressed with existing budgets as it partly related to costs connected to the existing Oracle/MHR support team which were due to be recharged to the ERP programme but could not be due to implementation delays. The costs also related to unexpected costs incurred against the IL4 Secure Network environment following an IT failure.

Members agreed on the need to maintain clear oversight of the budget for the ERP programme. The Chairman noted the importance of having Members sitting on both the Digital Services Committee and the Finance Committee to provide a reporting line, and encouraged officers to be confident in approaching the Committee at an early stage when issues arose.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

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

There were no questions.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chamberlain informed the Committee that the 2022/23 City's Estate Accounts had been published. The Committee joined the Chairman in congratulating the Chamberlain and her team for their work in accomplishing this.

The Chairman took the opportunity to provide Members with the details of attendance at Committee meetings over the past civic year and encouraged Members to consider twinning with other Wards where possible to encourage greater attendance. It was also noted that vacancies on Ward Committees could be opened to the Court.

14. 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 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item No.

Paragraphs in Schedule 12A

16-24, 26, 27

3

25

1 and 3

15. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

16. DRAFT NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE PROJECTS AND PROCUREMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The non-public minutes of the Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 February 2024 were noted.

17. **ESTABLISHING A LEGAL ENTITY IN THE USA**

Members received a joint report of the Report of the Executive Director, Innovation & Growth, the City Solicitor and Comptroller and the Chamberlain.

18. **MAJOR PROJECT DASHBOARD (PERIOD 11)**

Members received a report of the Chamberlain concerning major projects.

19. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**

The Committee noted a report of the Town Clerk detailing non-public decisions taken under delegated authority procedures since the last meeting.

20. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no non-public questions relating to the work of the Committee.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

22. **FINANCIAL SERVICES DIVISION RECRUITMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Members received a verbal update from the Chamberlain concerning recruitment.

The meeting ended at 1.23 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Ben Dunleavy ben.dunleavy@cityoflondon.gov.uk