

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 26 September 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held at
Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 26
September 2024 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Christopher Hayward (Chairman)
Deputy Keith Bottomley (Deputy Chairman)
Tijds Broeke (Vice-Chair)
Munsur Ali
Deputy Randall Anderson (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Henry Colthurst (Ex-Officio Member)
Mary Durcan (Ex-Officio Member)
Helen Fentimen OBE JP
Steve Goodman OBE
Jason Groves
Alderman Timothy Hailes JP
Jaspreet Hodgson
Deputy Ann Holmes
Deputy Shravan Joshi MBE
Alderman Vincent Keaveny, CBE
Deputy Paul Martinelli
Alderman Sir William Russell
Deputy Sir Michael Snyder
Deputy James Thomson
James Tumbridge
Philip Woodhouse

In attendance (In Guildhall)

Catherine McGuinness CBE
Naresh Sonpar

Officers:

Ian Thomas CBE	- Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Gregory Moore	- Deputy Town Clerk
Polly Dunn	- Assistant Town Clerk and Executive Director, Governance and Member Services
Jennifer Beckermann	- Executive Director and Private Secretary to the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee
Costa Antoniou (for item 4)	- People Insights
Peter Barlow	- Town Clerk's Department
Ben Dunleavy	- Town Clerk's Department
Ben Dixon	- Town Clerk's Department

David Mendoza Wolfson	- Town Clerk's Department
Chris Rumbles	- Town Clerk's Department
Emily Slatter	- Town Clerk's Department
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor, Deputy Chief Executive
Brianna Paterson	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- Chamberlain
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Sonia Virdee	- Chamberlain's Department
Genine Whitehorn	- Chamberlain's Department
Paul Wilkinson	- City Surveyor
Damian Nussbaum	- Director of Innovation & Growth
Allison Littlewood	- Executive Director of HR and Chief People Officer
Kaye Saxton-Lea	-
Deborah Bell	- Community and Children's Services Department
Torri Stewart	- Community and Children's Services Department
Katie Foster	- Remembrancer's Office

The Chairman highlighted that it was Greg Moore's first meeting following his permanent appointment into the role of Deputy Town Clerk and took the opportunity on behalf of the Committee to congratulate him on his appointment.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor Micheal Mainelli, Benjamin Murphy, Deputy Peter Dunphy Chief Commoner, Deputy Alastair Moss and Caroline Haines.

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

The Chairman, Deputy Christopher Hayward, declared an interest in item 8 Special Responsibility Allowance confirming that he would depart the meeting for its consideration and hand over to the Deputy Chairman to Chair the item.

3. **MINUTES**

- a) The public minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 11 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.
- b) A summary of the Competitiveness Advisory Board meeting on 29 May 2024 was noted.

- c) The public minutes of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Sub-Committee meeting on 26 June 2024 were noted.
- d) A summary of the Competitiveness Advisory Board meeting on 16 July 2024 was noted.
- e) The draft public minutes of the Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee meeting on 17 July 2024 were noted.
- f) The draft public minutes of the Capital Buildings Board meeting on 23 July 2024 were noted.

4. **Update on Staff survey results 2024**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief People Officer and Director of HR presenting findings from the recent staff survey conducted to assess employee satisfaction, engagement and areas for improvement within the organisation.

The Chairman introduced the item confirming that it provided Members with a high-level overview of results from the staff survey conducted earlier this year. Given the strategic importance in understanding the City Corporation's workforce, it was considered essential for Policy and Resources Committee to be updated on key outcomes from the survey.

A discussion followed, during which a number of areas were highlighted as requiring further consideration and review. A concern was raised over the responses received from staff within the City Corporation's institutions, with there being a need for better engagement with the institutions and to address specific issues within these areas to improve the overall staff satisfaction and morale. Reference was made to the survey lacking any reference to service the City Corporation provided to its customers and this being an area to look at next time. The Committee acknowledged concerns raised by staff regarding the behaviour of Members towards them and the potential for this to affect staff morale and the workplace environment; there was agreement on the importance of addressing concerns of staff in this area and looking to ensure the City Corporation offered a positive and respectful working environment at all times. Concrete steps were needed to address key issues in this area.

The score relating to Members providing strategic leadership was highlighted as an area of concern. A clear action plan was needed to address concerns raised in the survey, with it being critically important for staff to have confidence that action would be taken. A Member remarked on the next steps and actions set out within the report appearing too broad and it was suggested capturing these in a clear plan that could then go to Corporate Services Committee to allow for progress to be monitored effectively.

A Member referred to the ethnicity pay gap and this being an important point to include as an area for consideration moving forwards when considering diversity and how to address it.

The Town Clerk responded and thanked Members for taking an interest in the issues raised in the survey and for the comments they had provided in response. The Town Clerk added how he was very pleased with the level of engagement in the staff survey being at over 70%; a key concern was around those Members of staff who believe the survey would not make a difference and there being a need to convince them that Senior Leaders were taking it seriously and would be responding accordingly. This approach had been reflected in the views expressed in the survey regarding potential changes to the workplace attendance policy and a possible move to requiring four days in the workplace, with the staff survey response having informed Corporate Services Committee's recent decision to keep the workplace attendance requirement at 3 days a week and this demonstrating to staff that their views were making a difference. Action was already being taken on the staff survey and this was one example of it.

The Chief People Officer responded stressing how the organisation should be proud in having achieved a 74% response rate. Next steps would include sharing the results with teams, developing action plans, and monitoring these plans quarterly and reporting into Corporate Services Committee. With regards to a view on customers being included as part of the survey, a decision had been taken to ask staff what they considered of the City Corporation as a place of work; a customer related element could be considered as part of the next staff survey.

Members noted that the report presented today had been kept high level with an assurance given that diversity data and ethnicity considerations would be a key part of the action plans being developed. The Town Clerk's Executive Leadership Board were pulling together action plans and would be leading by example.

The Chairman concluded the discussion and referred to the City Corporation's Institutions, in particular City Bridge Foundation and City of London Freeman's School who had both been exemplary in their participation in the staff survey. The Chairman added how at any organisation its greatest asset was its people and how he considered it important for Policy and Resources Committee today to put on record its thanks to all staff who were doing a remarkable job and for them to hear how much their efforts were appreciated and valued.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Received the report and noted its content.

5. **Member Behaviour**

The Chairman referred to items 5a and 5b both falling under the broad header of "Member Behaviour", with some clear synergy, but with them being two distinct matters and confirming his intention to treat them as such during any debate.

a) **Independent Review of Member Behaviour (Local Government Association) - Proposed Action Plan**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk bringing together all comments received in response to the Local Government Association's independent review of Member behaviour and seeking approval of an action plan setting out next steps.

A Member referred to a discussion at the informal Court of Common Council meeting in February during which Member behaviour was only touched on briefly, but with an understanding and expectation given that more time would be allocated at a further private Members' meeting when the issue could be discussed further.

The Chairman responded confirming a further informal Court of Common Council meeting was due to be held in November, during which he would be happy to table a Member Behaviour item to allow for the issue to be discussed further.

During the discussion that followed the following points were raised.

- Not too much time should be spent on defining what good looks like given Members should already know this. It was a cultural issue that needed addressing.
- Clarity was sought on making Code of Conduct Training mandatory, with Members noting that a mechanism for making training mandatory would be wrapped into the Code of Conduct.
- It was suggested looking at what the City of London Police were doing and their training framework. They were not simply running a series of dry training sessions but were running an inclusivity programme which was seeking to be much more engaging.
- There was a need to consult both staff and Members, given the intention of building a cultural respect between the two groups.
- It was remarked that the best way to improve the culture, was to each model good behaviour.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, in making Code of Conduct Training mandatory, the Governance and Member Services Team would ensure that a sufficient number of training sessions were offered following the all-out elections in March 2025, before the April Court of Common Council meeting. Attendance at these would be monitored carefully. It was further clarified that the action plan had been considered in detail by Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee and was coming forward with their recommendation. Approving the action plan today would simply give a commitment to pursue the various workstreams in order to report back on each item individually, where appropriate. It was not a pre-determination by any measure.

Members noted that steps had already been taken to reach out to staff groups, representatives from Trade Unions, the City Corporation's Institutions and staff networks. The action plan offered a level of assurance to staff that action was being taken.

The Chairman responded and confirmed that it was not being proposed to withdraw the action plan at this stage, but to simply ask for its further consideration and discussion at the next Informal Court of Common Council meeting in November.

The Chairman added how he was in agreement that Policy and Resources Committee, as lead committee at the City Corporation, had a responsibility to lead on behaviour and set a model for others to follow.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Noted the points raised by Members (both at the Informal Court meeting in February, at your Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee and by direct response to the Town Clerk thereafter) in relation to the specific questions posed by the Reviewer and approved the Action Plan setting out the proposed next steps to help best address these.

b) **Members' Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Comptroller and City Solicitor and Town Clerk presenting a draft Members' Code of Conduct for approval for onward submission to the Court of Common Council.

During the discussion that followed, concern was raised regarding inclusion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism given its reference to Israel and this potentially creating a blurring of lines and confusion given its focus on one nation. A Member offered a reminder of the context and why the IHRA definition was included in the first place, which was a rise in hate crime, much of which was being directed at the Jewish community.

Steve Goodman proposed an amendment, seconded by Munsur Ali, that the IHRA definition of antisemitism be deleted from the Members' Code of Conduct.

A debate followed on the proposed amendment. Concern was raised that removing the IHRA definition would send the wrong signal. There was a need to be able to define antisemitism and IHRA's definition offered a standard form of words that was broadly recognised. A Member referred to issues of race hate that were targeted at the Muslim community also.

The Comptroller remarked on it being a sensitive subject, but with it ultimately being a political decision for Policy and Resources Committee and Court of Common Council. The Comptroller reminded Members of a need to have in mind their public sector equality duty, which required them to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between different protected characteristics. The Comptroller further clarified that should the IHRA's definition be removed from the Code of Conduct, this

would not stop a panel from relying on a widely accepted definition when dealing with a complaint involving antisemitism or discrimination.

The Chairman moved to the vote and the amendment was lost. The Committee returned to debate the substantive item, as originally presented.

A Member offered their endorsement of paragraph 6 in the report, which concluded that a Masonic Lodge membership should be included in a Members' register of interests. The Member added that they did not believe that reference within the guidance was sufficient.

Deputy Paul Martinelli proposed an amendment to Appendix B, 'Table 2: Other Registerable Interests', to add explicit reference to the Guildhall Lodge. Philip Woodhouse seconded the amendment.

During the debate that followed, a concern was raised in singling out freemasonry, with there being no reason to treat it any differently to a general disclosure as with any other society or membership. The Chairman concurred with this view and questioned why one organisation would be singled out over any other.

A Member highlighted a need for consistency and suggested that the specific branches of all relevant memberships should be listed. A Member proposed making it a requirement that Members list this additional detail as part of any and all Memberships, rather than singling out one organisation, with Members offering their endorsement to this approach.

Deputy Martinelli, as proposer of the amendment, responded confirming he was willing to revise the amendment to reflect this broader approach, requiring Members (where relevant) to specify specific branches of the membership body. This was supported by his seconder, Philip Woodhouse.

The Chairman remarked on their appearing to be a unanimity of views on the proposed amendment. A vote followed, with Members granting their agreement to the revised amendment.

A Member added that they considered this item in particular would benefit from further discussion, particularly on the aspect concerning the failure to engage in the standards process. The Member proposed deferring a final decision on this item to allow for a full Member discussion of it before coming back to Policy and Resources Committee for a final decision, with Members offering their endorsement to this approach.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Agreed to defer the Members' Code of Conduct to allow for an all Member discussion before coming back to Policy and Resources committee seeking a final decision.

6. Education Strategy Update

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services seeking approval of the Education Strategy 2024-29.

During the discussion that followed a number of points were raised. The importance of sport was highlighted including free swimming for girls and women over 60 years of age. Reference was made to the importance of exploring how students from the academies could benefit from work placements and other opportunities within the City Corporation, its associated businesses and the wider business community in looking to open doors. It was suggested that the introduction appeared too vague, with it needing to emphasise the importance of striving for excellence; clearly articulating the goal of doing the best for children to achieve social mobility and skill development. A concern was raised regarding the number of pupils being excluded, either on a short term or permanent basis; for children to learn effectively, it was crucial for them to remain in school.

The Director of Community and Children's Services responded confirming the strategy was intended to outline principles of what the City Corporation could facilitate in terms of additionality. This distinction was made to ensure the strategy respected the operational autonomy of individual schools and CoLAT, whilst also providing a framework for support and enhancement from the City Corporation. A cautious approach had been taken to addressing exclusions within the strategy given a need to respect the operational autonomy of the individual schools and CoLAT. Regarding work experience, conversations remained live and ongoing between the City Corporation and CoLAT looking at opportunities, with the City of London Academy Trust schools also having access to many City Corporation apprenticeships and this being over and above what would be available to other schools. Members noted that provision of free swimming for women and girls has been raised with colleagues in the Sports Division and Department for Community and Children's Services where it was being considered further.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Approved the Education Strategy 2024-29

7. Member Financial Support Policy - Uplift

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk seeking Members' approval that an inflationary uplift be applied to the Extended Member Support Scheme (EMSS) element of the Member Financial Support Policy.

The Chairman suggested that an inflationary uplift, if approved, could be backdated to the beginning of the fiscal year, with the Chamberlain having given an assurance that there was budget to allow for it. He was tabling this proposal as an option as there had been no review of the scheme since 2021.

Several Members spoke in support of the Chairman's proposal, with it being noted that:-

A Member, also Chairman of Finance Committee, supported an uplift in principle but opposed the proposal to backdate any payments. He felt that any uplift should be instead applied from the start of the new civic year beginning in April 2025. Several Members supported this proposal, as introducing an uplift after the all-out City-wide ward elections in 2025 would allow for the electorate to have been heard.

Other Members spoke in favour of the proposal, noting that by the start of the next civic year it would have been four years since the scheme was introduced, during which period salaries and allowances at comparable organisations would have been adjusted. It was felt that three years with no uplift or adjustment was unfair, with four years considered unreasonable.

Several further proposals were made, including that any future uplifts should be set in advance on a four yearly cycle, aligned with elections to the Court, rather than annual reviews. A Member suggested that, in the interests of transparency, the City Corporation should look to publish on its website any allowance a Member claims.

In response to a question from a Member on tax implications, the Chamberlain confirmed that any final figure would be dependent on Members' other income.

The Chairman confirmed there were three items that Members had been discussing on which a vote would be taken. A vote on the following items followed.

A proposed amendment from the Chairman, seconded by Jason Groves, that payments should be backdated to the beginning of the fiscal year. A majority of Members voted against the amendment. As such, the amendment was not carried.

A proposed amendment from Jason Groves, seconded by several Members, that a provision be added requiring the annual publication of Members' claims. A majority of Members voted in support of the amendment. As such, the amendment was carried.

A proposed amendment from Henry Colthurst, seconded by Randall Anderson, that an allowance be set and reviewed every four years in advance of the all-out Common Council elections and start of the new four-year civic period. A Majority of Members voted in favour of the proposed amendment. As such, the amendment was carried.

RESOLVED: That Members recommend to the Court of Common Council:

1. That an inflationary uplift should be applied to the Extended Member Support Scheme element of the Member Financial Support Policy, on the basis of the Consumer Price Index, to update the current allocation to £9,000 (applicable from April 2025);
2. That the allowance be set and reviewed every four years, in advance of each all-out Common Council elections;

3. That a provision be added, requiring the annual publication of Members' claims, and
4. That the Town Clerk be authorised to make such changes as required to the MFSP to allow Members to claim under both the EMSS and the Carer / Childcare element of the Financial Loss Scheme.

8. **Special Responsibility Allowance**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk seeking Members' agreement to recommend to Court of Common Council introduction of a voluntary Special Responsibility Allowance of £50,000 per annum for the role of Chair of Policy and Resources Committee.

The Chairman, Deputy Christopher Hayward, reminded members of his interest in this item and departed the meeting for its consideration, with the Deputy Chairman, Deputy Keith Bottomley, assuming the position of Chairman for its consideration.

Deputy Ann Holmes proposed an amendment, seconded by Deputy Henry Colthurst, to insert in the recommendation immediately before £50,000 'the amount by which the gross taxable income was less than'.

A debate followed, during which a number of points were raised. If the intention was to remove barriers to the office of Policy Chair, the amendment proposed was not going to achieve this, given most people in the City were already earning £50k per annum. The City Corporation should be looking to make it easier to take on the role and it was not clear how the proposed amendment would help to achieve this. A number of Members spoke and offered their support for the proposed amendment.

A vote followed on the proposed amendment, with a majority of Members voting in support of it. As such, the amendment was carried.

A Member, noting that the role of Chair of Policy had access to facilities that others did not, raised their concern that this role should be singled out and stressed a need for consistency. A Member also asked if there would be any public consultation on the recommendations. In reply to the latter, a Member, also Chairman of Finance Committee, confirmed that consultation would take place as part of the annual budget setting consultation meeting with business and domestic ratepayers held in February each year. There was a suggestion that the Financial Loss Scheme should be revisited as an enabler to office.

A formal vote on the substantive motion, as amended, followed, with a majority of Members voting against it. As such, the recommendation was not carried.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Refused a recommendation to introduce a voluntary Special Responsibility Allowance of £50,000 per annum for the role of Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee

9. **Capital Funding Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain seeking approval of release of capital funding (following gateway approvals) to allow schemes to progress.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- (i) Reviewed and noted the schemes summarised in Table 1 and, particularly in the context of the current financial climate, confirmed their continued essential priority for release of funding at this time and accordingly:
- (ii) Agreed the release of up to £31.5m for the schemes progressing to the next Gateway in Table 1 from City Fund £23.2m (including £0.5m for OSPR and £12.6m from CIL), City Estate £7.5m and £0.8m from City Bridge Foundation (CBF).
- (iii) Noted the CBF element of £0.8m having been approved by delegated authority assigned to the CBF finance director.

10. **Panel of Independent Persons - Report**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk presenting activity undertaken by the Panel of Independent Persons in relation to both complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct and applications for dispensation since their inception.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Received the report and noted its content.

11. **Policy and Resources Contingency/Discretionary Funds**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain providing a schedule of projects and activities which have received funding from the Policy Initiatives Fund (PIF) and the Policy and Resources Committee's Contingency Fund.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Received the report and noted its content.

12. **Revenue Outturn - 2023/24**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain comparing the revenue outturn for the services overseen by Policy and Resources Committee in 2023-24 with the final budget for the year.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Received the report and noted its content.

13. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk advising Members of action taken by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order Nos 41(a) and 41(b).

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Received the report and noted its content.

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

There were no questions.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no additional items of business.

16. 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.

17. Non-Public Minutes

- a) The non-public minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 11 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.
- b) The draft non-public minutes of the Capital Buildings Board meeting on 23 July 2024 were noted.

18. Charging Review 2024/25

The Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer relating to hire of Guildhall for private events.

=====

At this point in the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 40, a decision was taken to extend the length of the meeting.

=====

19. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk advising Members of action taken by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order Nos 41(a) and 41(b).

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

There were no questions.

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

There was one additional items of business as follows:

London Wall West Development

The City Surveyor provided the Committee with an oral update on the London Wall West Development.

Confidential Agenda

22. Minutes

- a) The confidential minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 11 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.
- b) The draft confidential minutes of the Freedom Applications Sub Committee meeting on 22 July 2024 were noted.
- c) The draft confidential minutes of the Capital Buildings Board meeting on Tuesday 23 July 2024 were noted.

23. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk advising Members of action taken by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order Nos 41(a) and 41(b).

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Received the report and noted its content

The meeting ended at 3.51pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Polly Dunn
polly.dunn@cityoflondon.gov.uk