

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF ALDERMEN
Tuesday, 13 May 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 13 May 2025 at
10.00 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Sir William Russell (Chairman)
Alderman Sir Charles Bowman (Deputy Chairman)
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Ald. Alastair King DL
Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley
Alderman Vincent Keaveny, CBE
Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli
Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley, DBE
Alderman Alison Gowman CBE
Alderman Timothy Hailes JP
Alderman Robert Howard
Alderman & Sheriff Gregory Jones KC
Alderman Prem Goyal CBE
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney
Alderman Bronek Masojada
Alderman Alexander Barr
Alderman Christopher Makin
Alderman Tim Levene
Alderwoman Jennette Newman
Alderman Kawsar Zaman
Alderman Simon Pryke
Alderwoman Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP

Officers:

Ian Thomas, CBE	- Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- The Chamberlain
Paul Wright	- Remembrancer
Paul Wilkinson	- City Surveyor
Gregory Moore	- Deputy Town Clerk
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Gemma Stokley	- Town Clerk's Department
Kate Doidge	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Alderman Sir Peter Estlin, Alderman Sir Nicholas Lyons, and Alderwoman Martha Grekos.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 4 March 2025.

RESOLVED: - That the minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 4 March 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Chairman's Congratulatory Remarks

The Chairman reported that Alderman Prem Goyal had been appointed as a Non-Executive Director at the Federation of Small Businesses – the UK's leading organisation representing and advocating for a community of over 500,000 small businesses and the self-employed.

Alderman Robert Howard informed the Committee that he had joined The Army Central Fund, the British Army's in-house charity that cared for the welfare of soldiers in the UK and around the world.

The Committee joined the Chairman in offering their congratulations. The Committee were encouraged to continue to feed in news of any similar achievements/accolades worthy of note.

The Chairman also reported that Alderman Prem Goyal had successfully returned as Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, with Alderwomen Elizabeth King as Deputy Chair. The Chairman also informed the Committee that he had been returned as Chairman of the Barbican Centre Board for the year ensuing. The Committee joined the Chairman in wishing luck to any other Aldermen still to stand for Chair and / or Deputy Chair positions in the forthcoming meetings.

4. **TOWN CLERK'S 2-YEAR REVIEW**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk, concerning a high-level executive summary of the work of the Town Clerk and his Executive Leadership Board over the past two years to January 2025. The Town Clerk introduced the report and provided observations and reflections, including achievements, challenges, and future opportunities. Questions were then invited from Members of the Committee.

The Town Clerk was asked how he was addressing silos at the City Corporation. The Town Clerk responded by referencing his Executive Leadership Board, which met regularly and aimed to enable thematic working. The People Strategy and the Corporate Plan were good examples of positive outcomes of working together to break down silos. The work on addressing silos also connected with Ambition25, which was key for redeployment and lateral movement across the City Corporation.

A Member suggested that the report did not properly highlight the importance of the Climate Action Strategy. The Town Clerk reflected that there could be matters of importance that may have been missed or overlooked in the report but were no less important and the Strategy was a strength to the City Corporation. Members would be receiving reports on the progress for net-zero in 2027 to demonstrate its progress against the climate ambitions.

It was noted that paragraph 5(j) in the report spoke to the communication and engagement strategy, and the need to strengthen the visibility of the City Corporation with its wider stakeholders.

The Town Clerk was queried on what the ambitions were for the use of AI. The Town Clerk noted that the City Corporation had agreed its first-ever Digital and Data Strategy, to address the challenge in managing data and ensuring data was robust and properly collected – AI could help address this challenge. The initial stages for using AI at the City Corporation were responses to basic queries such as the trialling and evaluating the use of AI bots for governance, health and safety, and HR-related queries. There were also trials of AI sensors in the Square Mile for matters such as identifying potholes.

It was asked what the Town Clerk envisaged for the outcome of the transformation agenda. The Town Clerk responded that the first year was focused on embedding change initiatives at the City Corporation, such as the new HR / Finance system and Ambition25. The second and third years were not as clear as to determine their agenda at this time. However, the Town Clerk hoped that the transformation agenda would result in a smarter, more efficient organisation that delivered world-class services.

A Member commented that many major sites were to be re-developed and queried the governance behind the ambitions for placemaking in the Square Mile. The Town Clerk directed the Committee to the comments on asset management and its links Destination City and the Culture Strategy. Discussions were already being held at a Committee level to consider the wider picture to ensure the cross-Corporation delivery of strategic intent.

It was asked how the structure and relationships between various bodies (such as Mansion House, the Court of Aldermen, the Office of the Policy Chairman, and the Committees) could be sharpened. The Town Clerk commented that he was pleased to see that Members were working to bring these bodies closer together, and officers were also working to ensure synergies – it was intended that plans for working closely would continue.

A question was raised on the HRA business plan, on when this would be reviewed, and what new partnerships would be developed. The response was that this would be led by the Chamberlain, and reviewed ensure that the HRA would be in balance over the next 30 years. The Town Clerk was aware of the pressures on the HRA and the need to deliver more homes, and work with partners to improve the quality of the housing stock and housing regeneration.

The Town Clerk was asked to speak to the City Corporation's international offices. The Town Clerk responded that he was unaware of any current plans to expand the international offices. Relating to the growth agenda, it was suggested that the City Corporation needed to think about how it could use its influence and reach internationally, such as in India, USA and China.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

5. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

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

There were no public items of other business.

7. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - That, in accordance with the Court of Aldermen's Disclosure Arrangement (Standing Order 25), the public shall be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen have determined, having had due regard to the Disclosure Arrangement, that disclosure should not be permitted.

8. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered and approved the non-public minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 4 March 2025.

9. **APPOINTMENTS**

The Committee considered and approved various appointments to Emanuel School, King Edward's School Witley (Bridewell Royal Hospital), and Sir John Soane's Museum.

10. **PRESENTATION - CITY SURVEYOR - COURTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received a presentation from the City Surveyor, concerning a courts development progress update.

11. **WARD BEADLES - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received a report of the City Remembrancer, to consider proposals relating to governance arrangements of Ward Beadles.

12. **APPOINTMENT OF THE CITY MARSHAL**

The report of the Executive Director and Private Secretary to the Lord Mayor was withdrawn from the agenda.

13. **MINUTES OF THE EMANUEL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting of The Emanuel Hospital Management Sub (Court of Aldermen) Committee, held on 5 March 2025.

14. **MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF ALDERMEN TO ADMINISTER THE SIR WILLIAM COXEN TRUST FUND**

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting of The Committee of Aldermen to Administer the Sir William Coxen Trust Fund, held on 25 March 2025.

15. **MINUTES OF THE MAGISTRACY AND LIVERY SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting of the Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee (General Purposes Committee of Aldermen), held on 27 March 2025.

16. **STRATEGY GROUP UPDATES**

The respective Chairs, or their representative, of each Strategy Group took the opportunity to update the Committee on progress against their objectives for 2025/26.

17. **KEY COMMITTEE ISSUES**

There were no matters raised.

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

There were no questions.

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

Several items of non-public other business were raised.

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm

Chairman

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