

Report – Policy and Resources Committee

Standing Orders: Light Touch Review

To be presented on Thursday, 12th September 2019

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

Over recent years, a number of *ad hoc* amendments have been made to the City Corporation's Standing Orders. It is apparent that a small number of inconsistencies have crept in over time which need to be corrected; in addition, a handful of legislative changes which have come into force in recent years are not wholly reflected within the latest document.

A light-touch review has, therefore, been undertaken to correct any inconsistencies in the Standing Orders, to provide further clarity where necessary, and to bring them up to date with legislation. This is not intended to be a wholesale review of Standing Orders. It does not probe the suitability of certain items, nor review whether custom and practice should be altered. Such a review would require Member endorsement and form the basis of a discrete and suitably resourced governance review.

As the Committee responsible for the review and co-ordination of the governance of the City of London Corporation, including its committees, standing orders and outside bodies scheme, your Policy and Resources Committee hereby presents revised Standing Orders following a light-touch review for consideration and the Court of Common Council is recommended to approve the amended document accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the proposed changes to Standing Orders be approved as set out at Appendix 1.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. Standing Orders are the written rules of the City of London of Corporation which confirm the internal organisational administrative procedures and regulate the conduct of meetings.
2. As a matter of good practice, the opportunity has been taken recently to review Standing Orders, to ensure that they read correctly and do not contain any obvious errors; that they reflect current practice; that any cross references are accurate; and to ensure that the formatting is tidy and causes no confusion.

3. In addition, a number of areas have been identified where further clarity is either necessary or would be beneficial.
4. The proposed amendments are set out in full using tracked changes in the attached Appendix, for Members' ease of reference. A summary of the main amendments is also set out below:
 1. **Application** – references to individuals throughout have been altered to make them gender neutral and the previous explanatory clause deleted (3f) as it is no longer required; reference to “Deputy Town Clerk” deleted as post no longer exists; and an amendment made to remove potential interpretation of Aldermen not being part of the Court of Common Council.
 10. **Ballots** – new sub-clause to clarify partial and full-term appointments.
 13. **Questions** – (10) a timescale for written responses inserted and (11) clarity over number of questions that may be asked.
 15. **Disorder** – clarity on the process, incorporating the inclusion of warning before any action is taken.
 16. **Duration** – to bring into line with the arrangement for committees (i.e. a two-thirds majority rather than a simple majority).
 19. **Decisions Between Meetings** – (3) greater clarity in relation to consultees, to reflect practice.
 20. **Petitions** – to bring into line with the deadline for Motions and obviate difficulties potentially caused by bank holidays.
 22. **Committee Limit** – clarity over the counting of committees for the number of committees a Member may serve on.
 23. **Ward Committees** – clarity over the composition of ward committees and a new provision to reflect the previously agreed position relating to the Community and Children's Services Committee.
 29. **Chairmen** – (3) inclusion of Standards Appeal Committee and also Investment Committee (in recognition of the fact it meets only twice a year and does not act as a “normal” Grand Committee); (6) inclusion of voting arrangements.
 30. **Deputy Chairmen** – to more fully reflect the protocol for the election of deputy / vice chairmen to the Policy and Resources Committee; general voting arrangements included for clarity.
 31. **Ward Reception Committees** – new SO (4) to recognise and include the previously approved process for the appointment of Aldermen.
 32. **Access to Meetings** – new SO (2) to include reference to filming etc.

35. **Attendance** – (3) to include the Standards Appeal Committee and correct reference to co-opted Members rather than ex-officio Members.
- 37 **Conduct of Debate** – (2) to include definitions of a point of order and personal explanation.
39. **Disorder** – inclusion of a warning before any action is taken.
44. **Interests** – to bring up to date with current legislation.

Part 9 Property – the following new SO included to reflect the previously approved responsibilities of the Capital Buildings Committee, consistent with the agreed wording within that Committee’s Terms of Reference:

54. Capital Buildings Committee

(i) Where projects have been referred to, or are within the remit of, the Capital Buildings Committee, decisions in relation to the acquisition and disposal of properties related to the project, including disposal or alternative use of current operational properties to be vacated on completion of the project, shall sit outside of the normal Standing Orders (53-60) governing acquisitions and disposals.

57. Freehold Disposals – revised amounts for anticipated receipt requiring approvals from £0.5M to £1M, to bring consistency with the thresholds for leasehold disposals; deletion of unnecessary specific reference to Corporate Asset Sub-Committee (as it is the Finance Committee to which relevant powers are delegated and which can decide to delegate further to a sub-committee or retain them as it sees fit).

59. Variations – revised to clarify financial delegation limits and present the figures in a table, consistent with other related Standing Orders.

Conclusion

4. It is recommended that the Court of Common Council approve the changes as set out in Appendix 1.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Revised Standing Orders (with amendments shown in track changes)

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 4th day of July 2019.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Chair, Policy and Resources Committee