

Committee:	Date:
Policy & Resources Committee	11 June 2020
Subject: Decisions taken under delegated authority or urgency powers	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
Report Author: Greg Moore	

Summary

This report advises 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) since the last meeting.

Recommendation

That Members note the action taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

Main Report

1. Since the last meeting of the Committee, approval was given to two matters under urgency procedures or delegated authority arrangements, pursuant to Standing Order No. 41, as follows:-

British Foreign Policy Group

2. At the informal meeting of Members of the Policy & Resources Committee on 16 April 2020, the Remembrancer advised of an early approach from the British Foreign Policy Group (BFPG) with reference to potential support to enable it to continue to operate over the coming months. Whilst the final details of the approach were not yet known, Members were supportive of the request in-principle and noted that a formal urgency request could be forthcoming.
3. The BFGP provides valuable access to government departments through its membership and involvement in the formulation of government policy. The BFPG's work is of particular importance in light of the Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development announced by the Prime Minister on 20 February this year, the most fundamental such review since the end of the Cold War. It is understood that the review is continuing but will now take into account the new challenges arising as a result of the Coronavirus epidemic.

4. The BFPG invited the City's consideration for assistance in two respects. Firstly, a contribution to their administrative costs, to encourage other stakeholders to contribute and to enable them to restart activities previously planned. Second, they were keen to initiate a research project, involving consultation across a range of sectors and industries (including virtual stakeholder events), to present constructive ideas for London's recovery as economic activity returns, to make the case for London as 'gateway' both to and from Europe, and, more broadly, to make the case for ensuring the direction of travel in the Integrated Review leans towards openness.
5. Further discussions with the BFPG helped to clarify the quantum of support that was required and the BFPG indicated that an urgent decision would be beneficial as they were currently unable to undertake any activities whilst staff were furloughed. This funding was to directly support the un-furloughing of staff and allow the BFPG to progress the various projects of influence and advocacy identified as priorities - including ensuring that soft power is made a central consideration in COVID-19 recovery planning and the aforementioned Integrated Review.
6. PIF funding was sought in response to the final request. Following approval under urgency, a sum of £35,000 has been made available as a contribution of £20,000 to the group's administrative costs and £15,000 towards the research project costs, subject the scope of the project being further defined to the Corporation's satisfaction. The remaining PIF balance, following this approval, stands at £1,015k.

City Streets: Transportation response to support Covid-19 recovery

7. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Her Majesty's Government introduced movement restrictions from 23 March. Subsequently, on 10 May, the Prime Minister outlined steps for a staged easing of these restrictions (although requirements for people to work from home where possible, and to practice social distancing, remain in place).
8. Whilst most people who work in the City can work from home, it is likely that some will begin travelling to work over the coming weeks. In the City context, any meaningful return to the workplace will need to be primarily by walking, cycling and public transport. Public transport demand will need to be managed to support social distancing. Space for car parking is extremely limited and an increase in the number of people using cars, taxis and private hire vehicles to commute is likely to lead to congestion, as well as increased air pollution and road danger.
9. On many of the City's streets, pavements are too narrow to maintain safe social distancing and in some existing arrangements could be a danger to the public. Significant care and thought, therefore, needed to be given to facilitate the easing of restrictions and the return to the office of City workers.
10. The Planning and Transportation Committee, therefore, gave consideration to the City Corporation's transport response and agreed two programmes of activity to deliver this response:

- On-street change, to provide additional space for people walking and cycling. These will first be installed using signs, lines and barriers to allow for easy adaptation if required.
- Measures to support businesses, manage travel demand, and encourage travel on foot, by cycle and on public transport.

11. On-street measures would include:

- Timed closures to motor vehicles (24/7 or 7am – 7pm, where necessary allowing limited access to premises for essential vehicles).
- Reallocation of carriageway to space for walking, queueing and cycling and providing priority for buses.
- Point closures or other changes in operation (e.g. switching to one-way).

12. The first phase of delivery implementation was to cover the following areas:

- Cannon Street between Queen Victoria Street and Monument junction
- Cheapside and Poultry
- Old Jewry and Coleman Street
- Lombard Street
- Leadenhall Street and St Mary Axe
- Threadneedle Street and Old Broad Street

13. These streets had been selected on the basis of pedestrian flows, pavement width, cycling demand and connections to destinations, retail and transport hubs.

14. Subject to approval and agreement with TfL, it was intended to begin delivery in the weekend of 30/31 May, so as to ensure the necessary changes to streets could be delivered in advance of a significant return of workers to the City.

15. Following the Planning & Transportation Committee's approval of the proposals and, in view of the urgency and in the absence of a Policy & Resources Committee meeting, the views of the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee (as the reference sub-committee of Policy & Resources) were also sought, to facilitate Member input and scrutiny. Following endorsement by Resource Allocation Sub-Committee on 27 May, the formal approval of the Policy & Resources Committee was sought and obtained under urgency procedures with reference to the objectives and delivery measures of the transportation response to CoVID-19 recovery.

Background Papers

16. Background papers for Members are available on request.

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