

Committee:	Date:
Policy & Resources Committee	24 September 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 actions 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 actions taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

Main Report

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

Appointments to the Investment Committee

2. At its meeting on 9 July 2020 it was proposed that, owing to the timescales arising from the coronavirus pandemic and the Court of Common Council's decision to undertake its Annual Appointment of Committees at its meeting on 16 July 2020, the Policy & Resources Committee should make its eight appointments to Investment Committee in advance of the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on 24 September 2020. This would enable the Investment Committee to meet ahead of the summer recess and appoint the Financial, Property and Social Investment Boards for the ensuing year. This proposal was agreed, with authority delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman, to make the appointments to Investment Committee following an electronic indicative ballot.
3. Subsequently, the vacancies were advertised to the Court of Common Council on Friday 10 July 2020, with Members invited to express their interest in the appointments and submit any supporting statements by 5pm on Thursday 16 July 2020. Members of the Investment Committee were also advised, with those Members appointed by Policy & Resources Committee invited to express their interest in being reappointed.

4. Following the deadline for expressions of interest on 16 July 2020, an electronic ballot of eleven candidates for the eight appointments was circulated to Members of the Policy & Resources Committee, inviting Members of the Committee to submit their votes by 12noon on Monday 20 July 2020. Following this deadline, the votes were counted by the Town Clerk, scrutinised by Sheriff Christopher Hayward, Chief Commoner Deputy Brian Mooney, and Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark.
5. Arising from the results of the electronic indicative ballot, it was recommended that Shravan Joshi, Tijs Broeke, Anne Fairweather, Alderman Prem Goyal, Dhruv Patel, Deputy Tom Sleigh and Michael Hudson be appointed to Investment Committee on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee.
6. There was a tie for the eighth position between Karina Dostalova, Tom Hoffman and Edward Lord. Edward Lord subsequently withdrew and a re-ballot of the two remaining candidates was undertaken, after which, Deputy Tom Hoffman was appointed.

COVID-19 Fund Bid – Maintenance of the Brakespear Mortuary

7. As part of the City Corporation's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it was agreed that a COVID-19 Contingency Fund be established to support the business continuity arrangements required to enable the organisation to continue its activities as best as it could during this period.
8. Criteria for eligible bids and a reporting framework were established, with it agreed that bids for monies from the fund of up to £100k be delegated to the Town Clerk or the Head of the COVID-19 Gold Group for approval; spend between £100k and £200k would also require agreement of the Chamberlain or Deputy Chamberlain; and spend over £200k would require approval from the Policy and Resources Committee.
9. In late July, a bid for £44,000 from this Fund was submitted, to cover the City of London Corporation's share of the monthly cost of maintaining the Brakespear Mortuary for a period of up to four months. The overall costs, includes security and supervision at the mortuary, are shared across the 32 London Boroughs and the City at a cost of £11k each per month. Its continued maintenance is integral to ensuring the resilience of mortuary capacity in London, particularly in the event of a second wave of infections.
10. Whilst bids of this level would not normally be subject to Committee approval (noting the approved delegations and thresholds for decision-making set out above), in view of the Town Clerk's involvement in the submission of this bid, it was considered in the interests of good governance to seek Member approval.
11. With the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee not until 24 September, approval was sought and obtained to commit the funds to provide for the next four months of the City's contribution, to ensure provision was maintained as lockdown measures were eased.

COVID-19 Fund Bid for Homelessness Provision Support

12. In addition to the aforementioned bid for Mortuary provision, a further bid for monies from the COVID-19 Fund was also submitted in late July. This was a bid for £261,400 from the Department for Community & Children's Services, to fund the ongoing availability of accommodation for rough sleepers during the recovery phase of the response to COVID-19.
13. As part of the response to COVID-19, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government had issued a directive to all Local Authorities within England to operate on an 'everyone in' principle. This involved ensuring that all individuals found rough sleeping within the Square Mile be offered accommodation.
14. In order to make up the significant shortfall in available accommodation, the City had procured space in hotels on an ad hoc commercial basis, along with procuring the sole use of a youth hostel (YHA) by St Paul's Cathedral. In addition to this, it was necessary to fund an increase in welfare provision, along with ensuring that an increase in safe, accessible, support was enacted by providers.
15. As the nation moved into the recovery phase it was necessary to maintain levels of accommodation to ensure that a return to the streets could be avoided, to help reduce the risk of an re-emergence of COVID-19 within the rough sleeping population during the easing of lockdown measures. There were also a number of associated support needs beyond direct housing costs that required funding, including to prevent antisocial behaviour/other risky behaviours towards self and others, and to fund the costs associated with additional commissioning and project management support.
16. The use of YHA to support the rough sleeping population in emergency accommodation had been in place since April and now needed to be extended under a new lease arrangement. As the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee was not until 24 September and the new lease needed to be agreed prior to that date, urgency approval was sought and an allocation of £261,400 approved.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) – Consultation Response

17. At the June 2020 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee, a resolution was received from the Property Investment Board. This resolution noted that HM Treasury were due to consult on the PWLB's future lending terms and asked Policy & Resources to consider that an appropriate submission responding to the consultation be made in due course.
18. London Councils was submitting a response on behalf of London's local authorities which argued comprehensively on a number of key concerns. It is the City Corporation's custom and practice to only submit an individual response if there are particular issues to be raised for the Corporation, or if it is felt appropriate in order to support by strength of feeling the London Councils response.

19. In this instance, following an assessment of the consultation document and the proposed London Councils response, it was felt there were two key points not addressed that could cause the City Corporation significant problems and on which it should comment on, namely:
 - The current proposals, if not clarified, could preclude the City from borrowing from the PWLB if any part of the capital programme includes commercial investment – e.g. commercial office space at Fleet Street development.
 - Any reduction in access to low PWLB rates was likely to influence the market rate we could secure for any future City Fund private placement.
20. As these points were not covered by the response from London Councils, a covering letter was drafted, supporting the London Council's response, but also highlighting these two key issues, which it was proposed be submitted to the consultation on behalf of the City Corporation.
21. As the submission deadline was Friday 31 July, urgency approval was sought and obtained to facilitate the return of a response by that deadline.

Contact:

Greg Moore

gregory.moore@cityoflondon.gov.uk