

RESOURCE ALLOCATION SUB (POLICY AND RESOURCES) COMMITTEE

Monday, 11 January 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources)
Committee held at Virtual Meeting on Monday, 11 January 2021 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Catherine McGuinness (Chairman)	Deputy Edward Lord
Jeremy Mayhew (Deputy Chairman)	Alderman Ian Luder
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark	Deputy Tom Sleigh
Anne Fairweather	Sir Michael Snyder
Sheriff Christopher Hayward	Deputy James Thomson
Shravan Joshi	Alderman Sir David Wootton
Alderman Vincent Keaveny	

In Attendance

Marianne Fredericks
Barbara Newman

Officers:

Peter Kane	- Chamberlain
Emma Cunningham	- Town Clerks
Greg Moore	- Town Clerks
Bob Roberts	- Director of Communications
Aqib Hussain	- IT
Damian Nussbaum	- Director of Innovation & Growth
John Barradell	- Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Peter Lisley	- Assistant Town Clerk & Director of Major Projects
Paul Wright	- Deputy Remembrancer
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- Deputy Chamberlain
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller & City Solicitor
Simon Latham	- Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Tijs Broeke, Deputy Keith Bottomley and Karina Dostalova.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

4. **GOVERNANCE REVIEW: COMPETITIVENESS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning section 6 of the Lisvane review on the City Corporation's governance arrangement, focusing on the area of competitiveness.

The Policy Chair began by thanking her Deputy Chairman for his hard work in consulting with Members on this topic and holding useful engagement sessions. Members heard how these engagement sessions had provided opportunity for collaborative working between the Aldermen and Commoners and that there was a unity of purpose. Primarily, the key themes that emerged from the engagement sessions were as follows:-

1. An informal, flexible focus group was needed
2. Decision-making powers on competitiveness should continue to lie with Policy & Resources Committee
3. It was important to be able to tap into Members' expertise in financial and professional services.

The Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen underlined the importance of working together and structuring the governance around competitiveness to ensure that there was full access to the existing business experience on the Court of Common Council.

The Policy Chair then took the Sub-Committee through the questions in the report, as follows:-

(i) Do Members agree with the need to establish a dedicated group, body, or committee in relation to competitiveness?

Members heard how the engagement groups had built unanimous consensus to establish this committee in a flexible way that ensured that Policy & Resources Committee maintained the democratic oversight of the competitiveness work.

(ii) If so, do Members agree with the recommendation to establish a free-standing Competitiveness Committee, or would an alternative vehicle/format be preferable?

There was some detailed discussion around whether this group would be more akin to a Working Party, and therefore some Members had questions about whether discussions would be subject to the Local Government Act, and therefore held in public. The Deputy Chairman confirmed that the consensus of the Member engagement groups had been to convene this as a "focus group", although others felt this term would not attract senior figures from the sector and debated other titles such as "Sounding Board", "Forum", "Advisory Board" and "Advisory Council".

Some Members also felt that there was no need for such a group to be formalised within the City Corporation's governance structure as it

could simply be an informal sounding board that the Policy Chair approached for advice.

However, the majority felt that, constitutionally, the group should technically be a Working Party of the Policy & Resources Committee but that the nomenclature would need to change to attract the right external experts. Some Members expressed concern that external experts may not wish to be caught up with the City Corporation's committee structure and underlined the need to make this group as attractive as possible to senior business leaders.

Towards the end of the discussion, Members appeared to lean more towards agreeing on naming this working party as an "Advisory Board" but it was left that a firm decision did not need to be made on this at this stage.

(iii) What should the composition of such a body be, noting the requirements to draw on both external and internal expertise more effectively?

The Sub-Committee felt strongly that it was important to leverage the expertise of internal Members and to ensure that there was diversity of thinking and ideas (with a particular focus on tech) within the composition.

It was also felt that the internal Members should not be limited to the Policy & Resources Committee but include Members on the Court of Common Council (including Aldermen) with financial and professional services expertise.

It was suggested that the core steering group include the Chair of Policy & Resources as the Chair, the Chairman of General Purposes Committee of Aldermen as the Deputy Chairmen, and also include the respective Deputy Chairmen of those two Committees. There could then be a further number of internal and external Members. One Member felt that the suggested overall size of eight felt too small and should be expanded, with others commenting that room should be given to those with relevant expertise on the Court.

It was also discussed that the external composition could be a flexible and based on an issues approach, whereby expertise was brought in to discuss particular areas.

(iv) How should the membership of such a body be determined and appointed?

A Member also called for the need for transparency in the appointment process and asked for job descriptions to be devised. It was also suggested that the core group listed above review against agreed criteria by reference to business position held a list of external names (with advice from Innovation & Growth) before they be

reviewed by the core group against the same criteria and then be put to Policy & Resources Committee for endorsement.

(v) What should the Terms of Reference of such a body be?

The Policy Chair underlined the importance of having clear outputs defined in the terms of reference, which would cover themes such as market promotion and provide direction and guidance to IG. It was felt important that IG could also quickly and easily reach out to the members of this Advisory Board for ad hoc and quick advice. Whilst agreeing, a Member felt that clarity had to be given on how this would be organised and that IG would need to really understand its status and remit – and that the Policy Chair would also continue to need to make minor policy decisions on the hoof.

The Policy Chair confirmed that the intention was that the City Corporation could still continue to take soundings from trade associations, for example.

(vi) Should any new body take on the functions of the Hospitality Working Party?

It was felt that this Advisory Board could give advice on strategic deployment on hospitality without taking away from Hospitality Working Party.

(vii) What should happen to the PRED Sub-Committee?

The Sub-Committee felt that the PRED Sub-Committee could be reconstituted to take away the “Economic Development” element but focus more on the scrutiny around communications and messaging, including public affairs.

At this point, Deputy Catherine McGuinness (Chair) had to leave for another engagement and Jeremy Mayhew (Deputy Chairman) took the Chair.

(viii) How should the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee be referred to?

A former Policy Chairman expressed the issues that can be encountered when explaining externally what the “Chair of Policy & Resources Committee” actually means in practice, and proposed that this was an opportunity to change the title to “Leader of the Council” to be clearer on what the role actually involves. It was also felt that changing the title to just “Chair of Policy” would remove the reference to “Resources” which was a key part of the role. Other Members then discussed in detail with one Member suggesting “Political Leader of the Council” and another suggesting “Council Leader”.

It was also recognised that the Lord Mayor was the head of the Corporation, and it was therefore important that the Chair of Policy & Resources’ role was clearly “Leader of the Council”, to reflect the reality of the role. Following a further debate, it was settled that it

should be recommended that the formal title be changed to “Leader of the Council and Chair of Policy & Resources Committee”, with the intention that, externally, the “Leader of the Council” would be used. It was recognised that the 32 boroughs already know that the City of London Corporation is different but it was important for the job title to be clear and in line with the rest of London.

Members agreed that this recommendation of changing the title of “Chair of Policy & Resources Committee” to “Leader of the Council and Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee” should be recommended to the Policy & Resources Committee for decision. The Deputy Chairman noted that this was an historic moment for the City Corporation.

(ix) Are Members supportive of Lisvane’s general commentary in respect of other areas set out in paragraph 11 of the report (and paragraphs 200 – 231 in the Lisvane Review itself)?

The Sub-Committee noted Lisvane’s general commentary on the mayoralty process.

RESOLVED, that:-

- The feedback provided by Members through the informal engagement process be noted.
- It be recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee agree the way forward for matters relating to the Competitiveness Advisory Board as outlined in the minute above.
- It be recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee agree that the title of “Chair of Policy and Resources Committee” be changed to “Leader of the Council and Chair of Policy & Resources Committee”.

5. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Sub-Committee considered a resolution from the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee from its meeting on 7 January 2021 concerning Departmental and Service Committee budget estimates 2021/22, to ensure that this Sub-Committee fully understood the issues facing Open Spaces since the 12% savings figure was agreed, and its joint impact on Open Spaces in combination with significant cuts in the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) funding.

The Deputy Chairman opened the discussion by outlining that the Sub-Committee were sympathetic to the pressures facing Open Spaces at this time and that if, during the financial year, income losses (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) created unmanageable budget pressures, RASC could consider the overall settlement, whilst still expecting expenditure to be very carefully controlled.

The Chair of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee then spoke in defence of the hard work of officers during the COVID-19 pandemic and underlined how hard the pressures had been. She also felt that the length of this particular meeting should have been scheduled for longer than one hour.

The Deputy Chamberlain underlined the Deputy Chairman's point that there was recognition of the particular pressures that are faced by the Open Spaces department, and that there were mechanisms in place should there need to be financial flexibility in-year due to COVID.

RESOLVED, that:-

- The resolution from the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee be noted.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Deputy Chairman asked whether any Member wished to raise any urgent business or comment on the non-public minutes. Members were content to finish the meeting and so the following items were taken in public with no commentary.

8. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 10 December be approved as a correct record.

9. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 11.26 am

Chair

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