

Report – Policy & Resources Committee

Report of Urgent Action Taken: Amendments To Standing Orders (Appointments To Ward Committees)

To be presented on Thursday, 15th January 2021

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

SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN

1. At the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 18 February 2021, as a matter of any other business the Chairman of the Finance Committee proposed that, with the Committee's consent, a recommendation should be submitted to the Court of Common Council to amend the Court's Standing Orders so an existing anomaly in respect of appointments to Ward committees could be addressed.
2. The Chairman of the Finance Committee referred to the current provisions in Standing Orders (SO23) which did not permit the Alderman of a Ward to be nominated for appointment to serve on a Ward committee (as the Ward's nominee) when the Ward's Common Councillor/s did not wish, for whatever reason, to assume the appointment.
3. It was noted by Members of the Committee, that:-
 - (i) the proposed changes should not place any obligation on an Alderman of a Ward to assume an appointment; and
 - (ii) the proposed changes had not been suggested by the Court of Aldermen.
4. Under current practice Standing Order 23 makes provision for Aldermen to be appointed to Ward committees on the basis of nominations by the Court of Aldermen. Common Councillors are appointed on the basis of Wards choosing to nominate a Member(s) to serve on each of the Ward committees or where one Member representing a Ward or Side of Ward has agreed to pair with another Ward, which is geographically nearby, for the purpose of representation on one or more Ward committees. If a Ward chooses not to nominate a Member(s) to serve on a Ward committee, the Town Clerk shall notify the vacancy to all Members and seek nominations prior to the appointment being made by the Court. Where a vacancy attracts multiple expressions of interest, these are managed through a ballot at Common Council. It should be noted that an Alderman could, in the current process, seek appointment but the Alderman of the Ward would not have any advantage over any other Member in nomination.

5. The Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 18 February 2021 was supportive of the proposal but it was agreed that delegated authority to make recommendations to the Court of Common Council in regard to the necessary changes to Standing Orders should only be progressed following consultation with the Court of Aldermen. It was noted that an informal meeting of the Aldermen was due to take place on 25 February 2021 and Alderman Sir David Wootton (Chairman, General Purposes Committee of Aldermen) commented that the matter could be considered informally at that point and the Aldermen's views fed back thereafter. It was anticipated that a recommendation, through the delegated authority process, could then be submitted to the March meeting of the Court of Common Council. However, due to the timescales, this was not viable and so a recommendation to Common Council, in respect of the proposed revisions, was progressed in accordance with SO 41(a) (urgency provisions) to ensure that the annual Ward nominations process could reflect the revisions and all appointments to Common Council committees could be submitted to the Court of Common Council at the start of the municipal Year (April 2021).
6. At an informal meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen on 25 February 2021, at which 21 Aldermen were present, Members considered the proposal and commented that there were examples where appointments had not been filled by a Ward and it was possible that, had it been possible to do so, the Alderman of the Ward would have assumed the appointment and been able therefore to contribute from a Ward perspective.
7. The Court of Common Council under urgency procedures subsequently approved that Standing Orders (SO 23) be revised as detailed back to enable the Alderman of the Ward to assume a Ward committee appointment where, for whatever reason, Common Councillor/s are unable to serve.

Revisions to the Court of Common Council's Standing Orders

The revisions to Standing Orders are set out in red text.

23. Ward Committees

1. Ward Committees comprise at least two Aldermen together with a number of Commoners as detailed in Standing Order No. 23(3).
2. The Aldermen shall be appointed on the basis of nominations by the Court of Aldermen (**notwithstanding SO 23(5)**).
3. The Commoners shall be appointed on the basis of:-
 - a. one Member from each Ward (regardless of whether the Ward has sides) having five or fewer Members;
 - b. two Members from each Ward (regardless of whether the Ward has sides) having six or more Members;

c. one Member representing a Ward or Side of Ward that has agreed to pair with another Ward, which is geographically nearby, for the purpose of representation on one or more Ward Committees;

d. up to two Members on the Community and Children's Services Committee from Wards with 200 or more residents.

4. Wards shall choose whether to nominate a Member(s) to serve on each of the several Ward Committees.

5. In the event that a Ward's Common Councillor/s does not wish, for whatever reason, to be nominated to serve on a Ward Committee, the appointment can, if the Ward so chooses and the Alderman is in agreement, be taken by the Alderman of the Ward.

6. After consultation with the Members of their Wards, the Deputy/ies of the Ward shall submit the nominations to the Town Clerk subject to the following:-

a. the term of office of a Member on a Ward Committee is one year;

b. a Member who has served four terms on a Ward Committee, separately or consecutively, is not eligible for appointment for a further term whilst there is a Member of the Ward who has not served and wishes to do so, unless the majority of the Members of the Ward so decide.

7. If a Ward chooses not to nominate a Member(s) (Common Councillors or the Alderman of the Ward) to serve on a Ward Committee, the Town Clerk shall notify the vacancy to all Members and seek nominations prior to the appointment being made by the Court.

RECOMMENDATION

8. We **recommend** that the actions taken under urgency procedures be noted.

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

DATED this 9th day of March 2021.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committees.

Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Chair, Policy & Resources Committee