

RESOURCE ALLOCATION SUB (POLICY AND RESOURCES) COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 May 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources)
Committee held on Wednesday, 12 May 2021 at 3.15 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Catherine McGuinness (Chair)
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark (Deputy
Chairman)
Deputy Keith Bottomley
Tijs Broeke
Karina Dostalova
Anne Fairweather
Tracey Graham
Sheriff Christopher Hayward

Alderman Vincent Keaveny
Deputy Edward Lord
Alderman Ian Luder
Jeremy Mayhew
Deputy Tom Sleigh
Sir Michael Snyder
Deputy James Thomson
Alderman Sir David Wootton

In Attendance

Marianne Fredericks
Deputy Barbara Newman

Officers:

John Barradell	- Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- Chamberlain
Deborah Cluett	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Bob Roberts	- Director of Communications
Angela Roach	- Assistant Town Clerk
Nigel Lefton	- Remembrancer's Department
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyor's Department
Bob Warnock	- Open Spaces Department
Gregory Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Joseph Anstee	- Town Clerk's Department
Dianne Merrifield	- Chamberlain's Department
James Gibson	- Chamberlain's Department

At the outset of the meeting, the Chair welcomed all those in attendance as well as Members of the public watching the meeting. The Chair then welcomed new Member of the Sub Committee Tracey Graham, and thanked outgoing Member of the Sub Committee Alderman Ian Luder for his contributions to the work of the Sub Committee. The Chair then paid tribute to the outgoing Deputy Chairman, Jeremy Mayhew, for his invaluable work during his time as Deputy Chairman of the Sub Committee, before welcoming Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark in his new role as Deputy Chairman.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Shravan Joshi.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **GOVERNANCE REVIEW: CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES; THE PRINCIPLE OF WARD COMMITTEES**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning the Governance Review in respect of constitutional issues, and the principle of Ward Committees.

The Chair introduced the item and outlined the Sub Committee's current position in the Governance Review process. The Chair recommended taking a holistic approach towards the questions raised by the issues treated in the report, before drawing Members' attention to the recommendations and proposals set out in the report. The Chair then thanked the Deputy Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee for his continued work in leading consultation sessions with Members and invited him to summarise the views raised during sessions on these matters.

The Deputy Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee advised that a key takeaway from the relevant engagement sessions was that Members were not in favour of a total abolition of Ward Committees. He added that he supported taking a holistic approach to these proposals and also that Members should be prepared to make bold and radical decisions, as if the number of constituted bodies was not reduced as an outcome, then the exercise could be considered a failure.

A Member commented that the recommendation within Lord Lisvane's report that the Court of Aldermen and its procedures should not be amended should be reconsidered, and proposed an independent review of the Court of Aldermen, as failing to discharge its responsibilities carried a significant reputational risk. The Chair thanked the Member for raising this point, which would be noted, but advised that it was not within the scope of the report at hand.

The Sub Committee then proceeded to debate the proposals set out in the report.

Section 2, the Corporation

The Sub Committee considered recommendations that the existing Ward structure, the relationship between the Court of Common Council and the Court of Aldermen, and the Livery's role at Common Hall remain unchanged, also noting a recommendation for a more coherent approach with regard to engagement with the Livery as a body.

The Sub Committee discussed these proposals and the following points were made:

- Engagement with the Livery would be most appropriately continued through the Livery Committee, although building relationships was a wider initiative which would be driven by the Court in general and the efforts of individual Members.
- There was a surprising amount of distance and misunderstanding between some Liverymen or Livery Companies and the City of London Corporation which needed addressing, and some Livery Companies did not feel connected.
- Whilst interest varied between Companies, the Livery as a collective was becoming more cohesive in recent times through initiatives such as the pan-Livery activities; however any changes made to existing relationship structures would need to be agreed bilaterally.
- The Livery had a clear historical and traditional role in relation to the City's governance but some Members questioned their modern role in relation to governance. Whilst Companies could be involved if they wanted, they were still effectively private members' clubs, some of which were still not open to all, which was problematic with regards to diversity.
- However, it was generally accepted that the Livery's role was mainly symbolic, and this point was made in Lord Lisvane's report.
- The Livery played a valuable role in education and the charity sector, but their involvement in City of London Corporation governance should be contained to Common Hall. However, Members also encouraged working with the Livery on joint offerings.
- The Livery was a significant part of life in some City Wards and several were making great progress on diversity and representing modern industry.
- The Court of Aldermen was ultimately responsible for the election of the Lord Mayor, with Common Hall performing an advisory role. Whilst Sheriffs were elected by the Livery, this was a unique process and was more democratic than the process of electing Sheriffs elsewhere.

Arising from the discussion, the Chair proposed that the Sub Committee agree the recommendation that no procedural changes be made, but that closer working and engagement with the Livery as a body should be promoted, and this was agreed.

Section 3, the City the Corporation serves

The Chair advised that there were no substantive recommendations within this section, with the discussion centred on increasing electoral registration numbers, work on which was already in train.

Section 4, the Corporation's Strengths and Weaknesses

The Sub Committee considered recommendations relating to Lord Lisvane's assessment of the City of London Corporation's various strengths and weaknesses. The Chair commented that there were not many specific recommendations with this section, but central issues included a perceived lack

of corporate endeavour and slow decision-making, with relevant advice provided. The Sub Committee noted that the recommended appointment of a Chief Operating Officer had been addressed through the Target Operating Model activity.

The Deputy Chairman commented that Members should give thought to the corporate Scheme of Delegations and consider allowing officers to take more of the minor decisions, as these contributed to the slow pace of decision-making and numbers of committees, so represented an area where Members should be boldest.

A Member commented that there were currently a greater number of Committees than there had been at the start of the Governance Review process and the next stages needed careful thought, as finding agreement on proposals could be difficult.

Section 5, the Court of Common Council

The Sub Committee considered recommendations relating to the operation of the Court of Common Council.

With regards to the number of elected Members, the Chair drew Members' attention to Lord Lisvane's advice that ultimately any consideration as to overall numbers must come after a new governance structure is decided upon, and that therefore no recommendation was made at this time.

The Deputy Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee commented that the Sub Committee could reflect on the most recently implemented reduction of elected Members, undertaken during the last franchise reform. He added that getting radical change through the Court of Common Council required strong leadership and unity of purpose in order to carry a majority of colleagues.

The Sub Committee then discussed the number of elected Members and Committees, and the following points were made:

- Once reductions had been implemented Members should guard against a return to current numbers of committees, perhaps by way of a requirement to submit business plans to the Policy & Resources Committee for approval before the constitution of any new sub-committees, working parties, or related bodies.
- The City of London Corporation had a wide range of responsibilities, and the breadth of activity required many Members, most of whom had substantial workloads under the current structure. The Sub Committee therefore should not be preoccupied with target numbers.
- Committees and Working Parties should be reduced or rationalised but not so far as to over-delegate and lose Member oversight.
- It was important to maintain a system that was attractive and accessible for Members also working full-time elsewhere.
- Whilst it was important to avoid the proliferation of Working Parties, they had their advantages as formal Committee meeting agendas did not

always facilitate free-flowing discussion. Central approval might not be necessary, but formal policy or guidance may be helpful.

- Changes should be geared towards attracting talent and the best Members and there were a number of aspects to this end which should be looked at together, and not necessarily as part of the Lisvane Review.
- Emergent or reactive action was a product of the nature of constitution, both in the City of London and the wider country. The number of Members and Committees needed regular review but there should not be an undue focus on numbers.
- Several areas of the organisation's activity, such as procurement, had significantly improved since the constitution of a dedicated body, and it should not be assumed that substantive business was best managed through larger committees.
- Focus should be on delivery, with the population to deliver it being secondary.
- A clear distinction should be made between Sub Committees and Working Parties
- Where the constitution of a new body made procedures more efficient then this should always be encouraged.
- A number of bodies consistently carried vacancies.
- Task & Finish Groups should be encouraged in place of Working Parties as they were time-limited, more actions-focussed, and had tighter and more specific remits.

The Chair then summarised the discussion on this section so far and proposed that the Sub Committee accept the recommendation that no change to the number of elected Members be made at this time, whilst noting the views expressed by Members. It was also not recommended that changes to the franchise be sought through primary legislation.

The Chair then drew the Sub Committee's attention to the remaining matters raised within this section of the report, beginning with Diversity, on which there were two recommendations, that that the City of London Corporation should do more to demonstrate diversity in its outwards-facing activities, and that training on diversity issues should be mandatory for Members.

The Sub Committee then discussed these recommendations and the following points were made:

- Some local authorities had a raft of compulsory training for Members, and there ought to be some compulsory training for Members of the Court, which should include Diversity.
- Wherever there were statutory obligations every measure to be taken to ensure they are satisfied.
- Compulsory training was harder to enforce in a non-party political system, but this was a good opportunity to bring it in for particular areas and make other changes, even more so if remuneration was introduced, to which compulsory training could be tied.

- There were various sanctions which could already be applied to Members in the event of refusal to undertake compulsory training.
- It was important for Members to understand the ramifications of their actions and for their advice to be backed-up with an appropriate level of training, as this would be a general assumption made by external observers. However, compulsory training would not necessarily be helpful in achieving this as it would be inherently less appealing.
- Sanctioning Members as a result of refusing compulsory training could raise democratic issues, given that Members are appointed by the electorate.

The Chair summarised the discussion by noting the plurality of views on this matter and suggested that there would be some areas where compulsory training would be necessary. However, in other areas, stronger encouragement stopping short of enforcement would be more appropriate.

The Chair then advised that a proposal on remuneration was due to be presented to the Court of Common Council in due course. The Sub Committee then considered the subsequent recommendations in respect of Standing Orders. The Chair, introducing this item, advised that the Standing Orders would benefit from a refreshing and thorough housekeeping, and hoped that Members would support this irrespective of amendments resulting from the Lisvane Review. The Sub Committee discussed the following aspects of Standing Orders in turn:

Ballots

The Sub Committee noted Lord Lisvane's recommendation for the abolition of all secret ballots and move to open and recorded votes across the board. Members that spoke noted that open and recorded votes took place on decision matters but felt that elections and appointments should continue to be made by secret ballot, as this allowed more freedom and reflected wider electoral process. However, Members were not opposed to increasing transparency by making greater use of recorded votes against Court and Committee decisions.

Motions

The Sub Committee noted recommendations made concerning the number of names required to submit a valid Motion and the ability to withdraw a Motion under discussion (which Lord Lisvane advanced should require the approval of the Court). A Member proposed that in addition to a minimum number of names required to submit a valid Motion, a maximum number of names also be introduced, and this was agreed.

Questions

The Sub Committee noted recommendations to require that questions to be published (obviating the requirement for oral delivery and accompanying speeches, whilst improving transparency), tightening the rules around supplementary questions (a decrease from 2 to 1 supplementary per Member, but increasing the number of Members allowed to ask them from 3 to 6), allowing additional questions (up to six) in relation to Policy Statements, and

dealing with questions not answered within the allotted time through written response.

A Member commented that they did not agree with these recommendations, which they felt would stifle debate. A degree of fluidity was needed on Questions to react to developing situations. A Member responded that they sympathised with this view, whilst noting that Questions was a time-limited part of the agenda. The Member advised encouraging questions in writing, as this was more efficient and produced better answers. However, oral questions needed as much fluidity as they could be afforded.

Members felt that ultimately, promoting debate was healthy, and it was usually sensible and appropriate to follow up on questions in order to generate debate. Members also felt that it was important to avoid discouraging Members from following up on issues on which they felt able to make substantive contributions.

The Chair thanked Members for their points on this matter and commented that the recommendations made by Lisvane did not necessarily compromise these principles, before advising that this matter could be taken away for further consideration. The Chair then invited any further comments on the remaining matters set out, noting that paperless working and Ward Committees would be the subject of further discussion both by the Sub Committee and elsewhere.

The Chair then thanked Members for their contributions and advised that further thoughts or feedback on the Governance Review could be submitted at any time.

RESOLVED, that:-

- a) The recommendations from Lord Lisvane's Governance Review and the feedback from the Members Consultation Sessions be noted; and
- b) A report be submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee proposing the next steps as set out in the summary consensus reached by this Sub-Committee as noted above.

5. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH SWIMMING FACILITIES - SAFETY, ACCESS AND SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor regarding safety, access and security improvements at the Hampstead Heath Swimming Facilities. The Chair introduced the item, noting the importance of the work proposed as part of this project.

RESOLVED – That the Resource Allocation Sub Committee:

- 1. Agree that a budget of £54,000 (excluding risk) is approved to reach the next Gateway;

2. Note total estimate cost of £697,000 (excluding risk), £755,000 (including £58,000 of costed risk post-mitigation);
 3. Agree that a Costed Risk Provision of £10,000 is approved to reach the next gateway (to be drawn down via delegation to Chief Officer); and
 4. Note that some minor works have had to be delivered already regarding H&S and infrastructure, but these do not change the overall scope, budget or programme of this project as have been funded separately. As detailed in Appendix 1.
6. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Town Clerk advising Members of actions taken by the Town Clerk since the last meeting of the Sub Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order No. 41.
- RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.
7. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**
There were no questions.
8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**
There was no other business.
9. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 be agreed as a correct record.
10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**
There were no questions.
11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 4.28 pm

Chair

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