

CIVIC AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE
Monday, 18 July 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee held at Committee Room, West Wing, 2nd Floor West Wing on Monday, 18 July 2022 at 1.45 pm and available to view at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z02ExJ1Ptkg.

Present

Members:

Deputy Edward Lord (Chair)
Deputy Simon Duckworth (Chief Commoner) (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Keith Bottomley
Tijs Broeke
Deputy Christopher Hayward
Alderman Ian David Luder
Deputy Brian Mooney
Deputy Sir Michael Snyder
Emily Benn
James Bromiley-Davis
Sophie Anne Fernandes
Deputy Dr Giles Shilson
Alderman Sir William Russell
Nicholas Bensted-Smith
Wendy Mead

In Attendance

Florence Keelson Anfu

Officers:

Jeremy Blackburn	- Town Clerk's Department
Jenna Brasset	- Chamberlain's Department
Rachel Cartwright	- Remembrancer's Office
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Hanna Grace	- Remembrancer's Office
June Haynes	- Town Clerk's Department
Fiona Hoban	- Remembrancer's Office
Claire Holdgate	- Innovation and Growth Dept
Dorian Price	- City Surveyor's Department
Chris Rumbles	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristy Sandino	- Town Clerk's Department
Peter Oscher	- City Surveyor's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Paul Wright	- Deputy Remembrancer

The Town Clerk referred to in person attendance at the meeting having been impacted by the Met Office UK Red Weather warning and potential for very warm temperatures having resulted in a number of Members joined the meeting remotely.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Chair was happy to facilitate those Members joining the meeting virtually to be able to participate in the meeting by seeking agreement of those Members in attendance in person at Guildhall to adjourn formal proceedings to consider all items informally before reconvening the formal session and allowing decisions to be ratified by those Members in the room.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Agreed to an adjournment of formal proceedings to allow for consideration of agenda items during informal session.

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Brian Mooney and Mary Durcan.

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 of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee meeting on 17 May 2022 be approved as accurate record.

Unguarded Protruding Stairs – A Member referred to an incident they had witnessed at an event recently when a guest tripped on unguarded stairs and a protruding obstacle and resulting in the guest having to be attended to by an accident and emergency doctor who happened to be in attendance as a guest.

The Member commented on the protruding obstacle still being in place during an event they attended over the weekend, despite having received assurances it would be removed. The City Surveyor apologised for the delay, confirming a notice had been placed on the staircase to highlight the obstacle but that he would now follow up on the issue to ensure it was resolved.

4. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk providing them with a work programme of relevant items relating to the work of the Sub-Committee. Updates were noted as follows:

Parental Arrangements – Work was underway looking at parental provision provided at other similar organisations with feedback also awaited from the Local Government Association. A number of individual London Boroughs have replied, but there does not appear to be a consistent position. The City Corporation's financial loss scheme appears to be consistent with those provided by Local Authorities when claiming for childcare required as a consequence of attending meetings or corporation business and so pulling this

into one document may be a helpful start. Changing tables and shelving units have been installed in a number of bathrooms across Guildhall since the last meeting, with a mini fridge and kettle in the lady Members' Room to help store milk / warm bottles. The City Corporation appears to be on the more progressive end of what councils were offering, based on current responses and information now needs to be drawn together into a single pro-active document to clarify the available support.

A Member stressed the need to ensure baby changing facilities were not only installed in the lady Members' Room but were also made available to men to ensure equality.

Member Administrative Support – There were currently two full time posts within the Governance and Member Services Team to support a select group of Chairs and Deputy Chairs. 0.5 of a post has been secured since the last meeting, but general pressures mean that work was ongoing to identify a further 0.5 of a post, without submission a growth bid, which were being discouraged at this time.

Review of Finance Assistance Scheme – Contact has been made with the Independent Panel around a discreet piece of work on SRA's, but they were not able to take on additional work as a panel due to the Chair's commitments elsewhere. Two of the three panel Members have confirmed a willingness to undertake the work together. In the interests of expediting work in this area, delegated authority was being sought to allow approval of the final fee for the work, with funding to be met from the Sub-Committee's contingency fund.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Agreed to delegated authority being granted to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman, to approve final instructions and fee for an Independent Panel review of the City Corporation's Finance Assistance Scheme.

Bookable Space - A Member remarked on the need for a bookable space to allow Members an opportunity to participate in Teams and Zoom meetings. It was noted this would be addressed later on the agenda.

New Member Induction – A Member questioned how feedback on the new Member induction programme would be concluded. The Board noted that the update at item 6 touched briefly on the Member development programme to date. Feedback was being taken from new and returning Members to understand how they had benefited from the induction programme and where they considered improvements could be made. This would then allow changes to be implemented and improvements made to the process in advance of the next round of elections. An update would follow at the conclusion of the review of feedback.

The Chair confirmed that they would be writing to all Members shortly seeking volunteers to sit on a Member Development Steering Group, which would be

looking to provide direct input and oversight into relevant areas of Member development and training moving forward.

5. **MEMBERS' WORKSPACE REQUIREMENTS**

The Sub-Committee received a joint report of the Town Clerk and City Surveyor providing an update in relation to a review of workspace resources and facility options to support Senior Members in their roles and seeking approval of proposals to progress this area of work.

The Chair referred to proposals within the report at option one relating to to utilisation of an initial three offices for the Chairman of Planning and Transportation Committee, Deputy Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee and Chairman of Finance Committee, with a request for the associated funding to progress this. Members were supportive of progressing option one.

The Chair confirmed feedback and views were also being sought in respect of the eastern part of the Mezzanine floor and the two remaining offices required for the Corporate Services Committee Chair and Police Authority Board Chair. Members noted a proposal for an open plan split space that could be used as an extended facility for other Chairs and Deputy Chairs.

The Chair referred to a room in the West Wing that was currently being used by a number of Chairs and Deputy Chairs, with it being proposed the Members using this room move over to a dedicated space on the Mezzanine level, with the West Wing room then being made available to other Members needing a quiet space to work from. This space would also include private PODs that would allow Members an increased level of privacy whilst working. Members were provided with an example image of a POD, which they agreed looked suitable.

A Member added that it would be good to get everything approved, finalised and locked in so the new space was ready in September and the facilities were available for Members on their return from recess.

The City Surveyor referred to an issue that needed resolving. Innovation and Growth have identified the space on the mezzanine level as an opportunity to increase their capacity in that area to accommodate their new Destination City Team, with there being a need to identify an alternative location for this team and this being part of a separate consideration by Operational Property and Projects Sub-Committee.

A Member proposed a review date be put in place in the future, to coincide with budget discussions, to allow for a review and consideration of any potential improvements following a period of time.

The Chair proposed a review of the facilities take place in six months' time to consider how it looks and feels and whether there would be a need to make a small capital bid to upgrade the facility in due course.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Approve Option 1 set out in the report, i.e., the utilisation of an initial three offices on the Mezzanine for allocation to Senior Members at de minimis cost.
- Approve funding of £10k from the Civic Affairs contingency allocation to resource the necessary move works, including minor refurbishment and decoration and other associated costs.
- Note proposals relating the eastern part of the Mezzanine and two remaining required offices, which will be subject to future reporting.

6. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk providing Members with an update in respect of Member Development and Training.

The Sub-Committee were introduced to June Haynes, the newly appointed Member Services Officer

The Chairman reiterated their intention to seek volunteers from the wider Membership of the Court of Common Council to sit on the Member Development Steering Group. The Chair referred to an additional allocation of funding given to Civic Affairs Sub-Committee, with a proposal to allocate 11k of this to support the Member training offering and bring the total Member training budget up to £20k for this year. The Chair confirmed it would be a decision for the Member Development Steering Group to agree any training they consider appropriate.

A Member proposed a range of potential areas for training. This included, looking at how to work together, managing conflicts, leading through change, microaggression training, with feedback from Members to date being a resounding yes to training in these areas.

The Chair acknowledged there had been instances of difficult Member behaviours and agreed that there would be a benefit in proving some of the areas of training outlined.

During the discussion that followed, there was agreement that the training proposed was a very good idea and needed, but it was questioned how all Members could be encouraged to undertake the training. It was suggested flexibility would be needed to allow online training sessions that Members could undertake individually as well as providing in person training sessions. It was accepted that not all training could be made mandatory, but it was suggested training could be offered to all Members, making certain areas mandatory and including this as part of the Members' code of conduct, with the potential of invitations to dinners being revoked where mandatory training has not been completed.

The Town Clerk acknowledged that there had been no formalised approach to training to date. The approach to Member training was now being enhanced,

through the introduction of a dedicated Member Services Officer, utilising an online training tool, refreshing the Member Development Steering Group and by increasing the Member training budget. The intention would be to move to a point where there was a publicly available record card showing what training a Member had undertaken and areas where there would be a benefit in a Member receiving further training, with a formalised training plan being put in place.

A Member suggested looking at other sectors e.g., education where there were mandatory training requirements in key areas and to consider what Member training could be looked at in the same way. The Chair referred to judicial office where mandatory training was required. A Member added that models already existing for the City Corporation to follow.

The Chair thanked Members for their input. It was suggested the wider points regarding making certain training mandatory would be looked at and reviewed as part of the Member Development Steering Group strategy.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Endorse the proposal to develop a new Member Development Strategy and the intention to present revised proposals in respect of the composition of the Member Development Steering Group.
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman, to consider ad hoc requests in respect of attendance at events or training sessions, until the new Member Development Strategy is in place.
- Provisionally allocate up to £11,000 from the Sub-Committee's contingency fund to support the Member training offering, with approval of specific training courses and associated draw-down delegated to Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Chief Commoner.

7. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The Comptroller was in attendance to provide Members with an update following discussion at the last meeting in terms of making changes to the complaints procedure in relation to informal resolution.

The Comptroller confirmed that the Chair of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee had met with the Chair of the Independent Panel following the last meeting to discuss making more explicit reference to the informal resolution route in the complaints procedure and an approach had been agreed, but with the final revised wording still to be finalised. A key change would be the inclusion of a tick box on the complaint form for the complainant to indicate whether they would be willing to consider informal resolution. If so, this avenue would be exhausted before the complaint would go forward to the Assessment Panel. Some other lessons learned from recent cases would also be incorporated.

The Comptroller sought approval for delegated authority being granted to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman, to endorse the revised complaints procedure once it was available and approve any

remaining matters relating to the Independent Panel ahead of submission to the Court. The Comptroller confirmed he would be more than happy to circulate the paper to all Members of the Sub-Committee for comment, with this being welcomed by Members.

RESOLVED: Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman, to endorse the revised complaints procedure and approve any remaining matters relating to the Independent Panel ahead of submission to the Court.

The Comptroller mentioned that one outstanding matter was the procedure for selecting a Member to advise the Appeal Panel on contextual matters. At present the complaints procedure simply stated that the Town Clerk would appoint a Member for this purpose. The Comptroller confirmed that an appeal hearing was pending and that the Town Clerk would welcome a steer on how best to exercise his discretion in the present case.

In terms of the pending appeal hearing, it was proposed that the Town Clerk appoint a Member in consultation with the Chair of the Independent Panel, the Chief Commoner and the Chair of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee. Moving forward, another option would be for a panel of Members to be elected annually by the Court for this purpose and then selected by the Town Clerk on a rota basis.

Members were supportive of the approach proposed for resolving the immediate issue, agreeing that further consideration could then be given to this matter in the autumn and the views of the Court sought.

RESOLVED: That Members agreed to the appointment of a Member to advise the Appeal Panel on contextual matters being dealt with by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Independent Panel, the Chief Commoner and the Chair of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee.

At this point in the meeting, a Member highlighted their observations on the Members' Code of Conduct, specifically around Member behaviour. The Member confirmed that they had been in correspondence with the Comptroller and had been sent some helpful documents. These included a report presented to Court of Common Council in 2020, which had recommended that worked examples of bullying and harassment be included in the Members' Code of Conduct, as well as the new Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct, which the Comptroller was intending to bring to the next meeting for comment.

The Member suggested the City Corporation's Members' Code of Conduct was currently too vague, with explicit examples needed to make clear unacceptable behaviours. At this point in time Members were able to dispute any suggestion of bullying behaviour, with the Members' Code of Conduct needing to be more explicit around vexatious behaviour and clear on what behaviour was acceptable. The Member suggested the Members' Code of Conduct required a detailed review, updating and approval by the Court of Common Council.

The Member highlighted a further consideration when looking at what action can be taken once a Member has been found to be bullying or harassing. There was a need to lead by example, with it not being acceptable to allow bullying or harassing behaviour to slide. The Member suggested that Members' views and thoughts be sought on this before looking at a refresh of the Members' Code of Conduct and presenting it to Court of Common Council.

During the discussion that followed, it was acknowledged that whatever was written in the Members' Code of Conduct would only ever be part of the picture, and that in terms of what harassment and respect looked like the individual context would always be important.

The Deputy Chairman remarked on there being a need for further consideration around enforceability and sanctions, noting that limited sanctions were currently available as a matter of law and that Members were elected representatives.

The proposal for inclusion of explicit examples was welcomed, with this having been proposed previously but not having received the support of all Members. It was suggested there may now be increased appetite for this proposal with the new cohort of Members.

The Chair noted that the Comptroller was intending to circulate a report on the Members' Code of Conduct and, in light of the comments raised, requested that he consult with relevant Members before bringing forward proposals to Civic Affairs Sub-Committee for their further consideration.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Instruct officers to review the Members' Code of Conduct, in consultation with interested Members, and bring forward proposals in the autumn.

8. **STANDARDS**

The Comptroller confirmed there were no additional standards related issues to share at this time.

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

There were no public questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no urgent items of business.

At this point in the Meeting, the formal meeting was reconvened to allow those Members in the room in Guildhall an opportunity to ratify and approve the decisions reached during informal session.

Resolved: That Members: -

- Granted their approval of the decisions reached during informal session.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That Members agreed to exclude the public for the following matters relating to functions of the Court of Common Council which were not subject to the provisions of Part VA and Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, relating to public access to meetings.

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

12. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the Minutes from the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee meeting on 17 May 2022 be approved as an accurate record.

13. **DELEGATED AUTHORITY REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk detailing delegated action taken between meetings.

14. **BENEFICES UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee considered an update of the Chair in relation to Benefices.

15. **APPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF GREAT HALL**

The Sub-Committee considered a report detailing applications for the use of Guildhall.

16. **COMMITTEE HOSPITALITY**

The Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer relating to committee hospitality.

Applications for Hospitality

The Sub-Committee considered several applications for hospitality.

- **Application A**
- **Application B**
- **Application C**
- **Application D**

17. **REVIEW OF THE GUILDHALL ELIGIBLE CATERERS LIST**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer relating to a review of the Guildhall Eligible Caterers List.

18. **CORPORATE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Innovation and Growth detailing corporate and stakeholder engagements events.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a) Forthcoming Commitments

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer detailing forthcoming commitments.

b) Summary of Committed Hospitality Funding for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24.

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and Remembrancer detailing committed hospitality funding.

Part 3 - Confidential Agenda

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the confidential minutes from the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee meeting on 17 May 2022 be approved as an accurate record.

20. MEMBERS' BUSINESS TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk relating to Members' Business Travel and Transportation policies.

21. MEMBER REQUESTED ITEM

The Sub-Committee considered a Member requested item.

The meeting ended at 4.05pm

Chair

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