

Committee(s) General Purposes Committee of Aldermen Policy and Resources Committee	Date: 18 October 2022 20 October 2022
Subject: Reviewed and Updated Wardmote Book	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	6 and 8
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
Report of: Comptroller and City Solicitor and Town Clerk and Chief Executive	For Information
Report author: Edward Wood, Chief Solicitor	

Summary

The Wardmote Book is the City Corporation's technical manual for ward elections. Members reviewed the Wardmote Book in October 2021, prior to the resumption of ward elections in March 2022. A further updated version is now available online. The most notable amendments are set out in this report.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the updates to the Wardmote Book.

Main Report

Background

1. The Wardmote Book is the City Corporation's technical manual for ward elections, which attempts to draw together and summarise the complex mosaic of national and local legislation, together with Acts of Common Council and convention. It is in regular use by officers and is also published on the City Corporation's website for use by Members, candidates, agents and members of the public who wish to learn about the detail of the electoral process. It is not meant to take the place of more focussed guidance for residents and businesses during the canvass, and for candidates and agents during the election period, which is also produced.

2. The Wardmote Book has historically been updated as the need has arisen, and generally in advance of the ordinary elections of Common Councilmen every four years. The last revision was in August 2021. Members requested sight of that edition, which was brought to Committee in October 2021, in readiness for the resumption of ward elections in March 2022. Given the City Corporation's drive to enhance voter engagement, it was suggested that it would be appropriate to build in a formal review process before each 'all out' election to be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee and the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen, as the Committees with responsibility for the oversight of elections.
3. It was not intended that this would prevent any revisions to the Wardmote Book which became necessary in the interim, for example due to significant legislative changes, or constitutional changes, which might impact on Aldermanic elections or Common Council by-elections. It was proposed that both Committees would be informed of any such amendments between formal reviews, which is the purpose of the current report.

Updates

4. An updated version of the Wardmote Book has been prepared in consultation with relevant colleagues in the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department, the Town Clerk's Department and the Remembrancer's Office. This has been published on the Corporation's website in the normal way and can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/about-us/voting-elections/ward-elections>.
5. It is not proposed to summarise all of the changes in that document, but the most notable amendments are as follows:
 - (i) References to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II have been replaced with references to His Majesty King Charles III;
 - (ii) The election timetable has been updated with the relevant dates for the 'all out' elections of Common Councilmen in March 2025;
 - (iii) Most Covid-19 references have now been deleted, except in relation to the current shortened three year terms;
 - (iv) The nationality requirement for Aldermen has been reworded, to reflect the recent Act of Common Council, and the relevant forms have been amended;
 - (v) The retirement age for Aldermen has been increased, in accordance with the recent resolution;
 - (vi) The ability for a Lord Mayor's Aldermanic Representative to preside at a wardmote has been referenced, as per the recent Act of Common Council;

- (vii) The new requirement for Aldermen Elect to submit a statutory declaration regarding their qualification for office has been included, in accordance with the recent resolution;
 - (viii) There is an additional paragraph in the foreword on gender neutral language.
6. It is worth noting that the Elections Act 2022 will also impact on ward elections in a number of ways. As the relevant provisions are not yet in force, they aren't reflected in the Wardmote Book at this stage, or considered further here. They will start to be implemented through regulations, from 2023 onwards, which will then necessitate a further review of the Wardmote Book.

Conclusion

7. The Wardmote Book has been updated as part of an ongoing work cycle and the latest version is now available online. The Elections Act 2022 will necessitate a further review of the Wardmote Book in the short to medium term.

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