

Committee(s) Civic Affairs Sub-Committee	Dated: 31/03/2023
Subject: Decisions taken under delegated authority or urgency powers.	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	See Background Report
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	See Background Report
If so, how much?	See Background Report
What is the source of Funding?	See Background Report
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	See Background Report
Report of: Deputy Town Clerk	For Information
Report author: Chris Rumbles, Town Clerk's Department	

Summary

This report advises Members of action taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order Nos. 41(a) and 41(b).

Recommendation

That Members note the action taken.

Main Report

Approval has been given under urgency procedures or delegated authority arrangements, pursuant to Standing Order No. 41, as follows: -

Delegated Decision: Purchase Card Policy for Lord Mayor and Policy Chair

BACKGROUND:

At the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee meeting on 18 July 2022, the Chair raised an issue relating to the Chairman of Policy hosting external guests on behalf of the City Corporation at his own expense and then often having to wait up to eight weeks for reimbursement of expenses incurred. Members were in agreement that the Chamberlain be instructed to review the previous decision on provision of a corporate purchase for the Chairman of Policy and granted delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman to progress any decision required for implementation of this decision.

The matter was raised again at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 15 December 2022, when it was noted that the Chairman was still being required to incur significant expenses on his personal account in the process of conducting business on behalf of the City Corporation. Both the Lord Mayor and Policy Chair were required to incur expenses from their personal funds and then claim these back; given the nature of their roles the level of expenses incurred is greater than those incurred by

other Member roles. It has been noted that the process was restrictive and put the Lord Mayor and Policy Chair at a disadvantage; the provision of a Purchase Card (P-Card), as provided to Officers, would resolve this issue.

The Chamberlain confirmed that regulations and policies would need updating. The Chamberlain agreed to review relevant regulations and policies and to have the matter resolved by 31st January 2023, with Members of Policy and Resources Committee agreeing to this timetable and granting delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to take a decision necessary.

The Chamberlain took the opportunity to review the existing Purchase Card Policy and developed a specific element relating to the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee and The Lord Mayor, taking into account the higher level of expenses that these two postholders may be required to incur in conducting business on behalf of the City Corporation (particularly in relation to emergency or urgent need, such as a last minute changes enforced on travel or accommodation plans). In considering the position, it had been recognised that the Lord Mayor incurs similar expenses in conducting business on behalf of the City Corporation and that it would be appropriate to include this role in any revision to the policy so as to make provision for usage, should it be required; this position is analogous to that identified in the Business Travel Policy, which recognises the unique roles of the two postholders and places them under distinct arrangements.

The revised policy is modelled on the current Officer policy, whilst taking into account the differing nature of the Member role in this case and altering provision accordingly. The revised code still requires usage in accordance with the City of London Procurement Code, Financial Regulations, Members Code of Conduct, Travel and Subsistence Policy and Business Travel Scheme and aligns with these existing policies as a result.

Decisions of the relevant Committees (Civic Affairs Sub-Committee given its remit in respect of Members' Privileges; and the Finance Committee given its ownership of the Financial Regulations, which the purchase card policy forms part of, and seeking agreement to proposed changes therein), were sought.

REASON FOR URGENCY: Civic Affairs Sub-Committee and Policy and Resources Committee were in agreement that a purchase card should be expedited and provided at the earliest opportunity.

An urgent decision of Finance Committee was therefore sought to allow updates to relevant financial regulations and policies, with Civic Affairs Sub-Committee being asked to grant a decision under delegated authority to endorse the proposed changes to the policy and agree that it was appropriate.

Recommendation:

To approve the Purchase Card Policy for The Lord Mayor and the Policy Chair, for implementation effective 1 February 2023.

In accordance with Standing Order 41 (a) and 41 (b), Members are asked to note the recent decisions taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

Copies of background papers concerning this decision is available from Chris Rumbles on request.

Contact:

Chris Rumbles

Tel 020 7332 1405

Christopher.rumbles@cityoflondon.gov.uk