

Committee(s): Policy and Resources Committee	Dated: 20 April 2023
Subject: Revised Civic Affairs Sub-Committee Terms of Reference	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3, 6, 8, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	None
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Deputy Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author: Polly Dunn, Principal Governance and Member Services Manager	

Summary

On the 23 March 2023, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed proposals to bifurcate the current Civic Affairs Committee, separating out responsibilities for Standards and Member Learning and Development, to be overseen by a new sub-committee of Policy. This report sets out a final draft of terms of reference for the two bodies, including composition and suggested regularity of meetings.

In addition to the proposals considered by Policy & Resources, at a later meeting (31 March 2023) the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee reviewed the 2022/23 terms of reference and agreed to recommend further changes to the Policy & Resources Committee.

The Terms of Reference are set out for Members' consideration at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Changes will only be implemented following the annual appointment of sub-committees, undertaken by Policy & Resources at its May meeting.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Consider and approve the revised terms of reference and composition of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee, set out at appendix 1.
- Consider and approve the name, draft terms of reference, composition and regularity of meetings for the Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee, set out at appendix 2.
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to make any final amendments ahead of the May Policy & Resources Committee meeting.

Main Report

Background

1. In February 2023, the Policy and Resources Committee feedback from Members as part of the Light Touch Governance Review (LTGR). The LTGR was commissioned by Members as a means by which to remedy any significant and immediate causes for concern within the Corporation's governance structure, that had directly arisen from changes made as part of a broader governance review, undertaken by the City Corporation and Lord Lisvane over 2020-2022.
2. At this meeting, as part of a number of recommendations, it was agreed that officers should bring forward proposals for the remit of Civic Affairs Sub-Committee to be altered, including potential bi-furcation, and the reporting lines for Standards and Benefices related matters.
3. On 23 March, the Committee debated a preferred approach and it was agreed that the areas of Standards and Member Learning and Development would be separated out into a new, distinct Sub-Committee, to be chaired by the Chief Commoner.
4. Following this agreement, the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee also considered its existing terms of reference and made a number of recommendations as to its composition.

Current Position

Civic Affairs Sub-Committee

5. Set out in Appendix 1, is the proposed new terms of reference for the Civic Affairs Sub Committee.
6. Based on the recommendation of Policy & Resources at its March meeting, paragraphs (j), (l)-(q) have been deleted on the basis that they will be assumed by the new sub-committee (see appendix 2).
7. The Civic Affairs Sub-Committee have also made recommendations to revise its composition. These changes are:
 - That the immediate past Chief Commoner remain on the Sub-Committee for the entire year after their successor has taken post. This had previously been limited to six months, subject to the election of Chief Commoner in October of each year, at which point the position swapped with the Chief-Commoner Elect.
 - Allowing the Chairman of Finance to appoint a nominee to the Sub-Committee. This had previously already been agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee so is in essence, a correction.
 - That the Policy & Resources representatives are no longer required to be Members of Policy & Resources Committee and can instead be from the wider Court, nominated by the Committee.

8. It is for Members of the Policy & Resources Committee to determine the responsibilities and composition of this sub-committee.

Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee

9. Set out in Appendix 2, is the proposed new terms of reference for a Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee.
10. Based on the recommendation of Policy & Resources at its March meeting, paragraphs (j), (l)-(q) have been taken from the existing Civic Affairs Sub-Committee. No further changes have been made to the responsibilities.
11. What was not discussed at the previous Committee meeting, was the composition of this second Sub-Committee. A proposal has been brought forward as a catalyst for discussion and debate, but the final composition is for Members to discuss and agree. The proposed composition is as follows:
 - The Chief Commoner (to act as Chairman)
 - Immediate past Chief Commoner*
 - Chairman and Deputy Chairman (or a Vice Chairman) of the Policy & Resources Committee
 - One Alderman nominated by the Court of Aldermen
 - Two Members nominated by the Policy & Resources Committee
 - Two Members nominated by the Education Board
 - Two Members nominated by the Corporate Services Committee
 - Together with two Members of the Court of Common Council, to be elected by the Court.
12. The Chairship arrangements were agreed at the previous meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee, however, the proposed wider Membership has been informed by the existing Member Learning & Development Steering Group. Additional representatives have been added for Education Board in light of learning/development expertise. Representatives from Corporate Services Committee have been added given the Committee's oversight of staff development and training, and indeed the potential overlap of standards, the Code of Conduct and Member Officer Charter.
13. In the first instance, it is proposed that this sub-committee be scheduled to meet quarterly, although this is also something that can be discussed at the sub-committee's first meeting.

Options

14. Members are invited to either:
 - a) Approve the terms of reference as drafted;
 - b) Revise and approve the terms of reference, as amended;
 - c) Advise on more significant changes and task officers to bring back revised proposals.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

15. The whole purpose of the Governance Review and subsequently the Light Touch Governance Review, is to help ensure that the City Corporation has in place the best governance structures to deliver against our Corporate Plan. To ensure this, continued cross-departmental consultation needs to be undertaken, particularly ahead of the report proposed for March 2023.

Financial implications

16. See Resource Implications.

Resource implications –

17. There will be resource implications within the Governance and Member Services Team on the basis that this is one additional committee to administer. Should this sub-committee meet quarterly, as the Member Learning and Development Steering Group does, this additional implication will be marginal and initially it should be possible to absorb this additional sub-committee with existing resource.

Legal implications

18. There are none.

Risk implications

19. As with any process of significant change, there are risks associated with implementation and unforeseen challenges as the new system embeds. Whilst a new system was brought into effect last year, significant organisational turnover across departments, including the Town Clerk's department, inhibited the ability to communicate and embed organisational understanding of some of these changes. This risk is therefore mitigated with the request that matters be staggered and brought to Members on a priority basis, so that communications and training piece can assist with Corporation-wide implementation.

Equalities implications

20. Under the Equality Act 2010, all public bodies have a duty to ensure that when exercising their functions they have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and to take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people and encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. The proposals contained in this report do not have any potential negative impact on a particular group of people based on their protected characteristics.

Climate implications

21. The proposals included in this paper do not carry any significant implications for the Climate Action programme.

Security implications

22. There are none.

Conclusion

23. The proposed terms of reference are presented for consideration on the recommendation of the Policy & Resources Committee. Final approval is sought to ensure that an agreed structure is in place for the Policy & Resources Committee to appoint at its first meeting of the Civic year, in May.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Revised Terms of Reference for the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee
- Appendix 2 – Proposed Terms of Reference for the Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee

Background Papers

[Policy & Resources Committee: Governance Review – November 2021](#)

[Court of Common Council: Governance Review – December 2021](#)

[Court of Common Council: Review of Standing Orders – March 2022](#)

[Policy & Resources Committee: Light Touch Governance Review – February 2023](#)

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