

CIVIC AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE
Friday, 31 March 2023

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Edward Lord (Chair)
Deputy Simon Duckworth (Chief Commoner) (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Keith Bottomley
Mary Durcan
Alderman Ian David Luder
Alderman Gregory Jones KC
Alderman Sir William Russell

In attendance:

Ruby Sayed

Officers:

Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Bob Roberts	- Deputy Town Clerk
Greg Moore	- Assistant Town Clerk
Paul Double	- City Remembrancer
Rachel Cartwright	- Events Manager, City Remembrancers
Paul Wright	- Deputy Remembrancer
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks

Before commencing the business on the agenda, a Member asked about technical issues at Committee meetings which might prevent or interrupt livestreaming, and the implications thereof. It was clarified that the livestreaming and uploading of meeting recordings was offered by the City of London Corporation in the interests of transparency but was not an explicit requirement of the Local Government Act; public access was exercised through the publication of agendas and access for members of the public to attend committee meetings physically. Therefore, any inability to livestream for technical reasons was not problematic in a legal sense; however, in the interests of providing helpful clarity to the public, it was suggested that a note be placed on the website or on relevant agendas indicating that where livestreaming is not possible or is interrupted, recordings are uploaded to YouTube as soon as is practicable.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Ann Holmes, Tijs Broeke, Nick Bensted-Smith, Wendy Mead, Alderman Michael Mainelli, Deputy Chris Hayward, James Bromiley-Davis, Emily Benn, Sophie Fernandes, Giles Shilson and Sir Michael Snyder.

James Bromiley-Davis, Sophie Fernandes and Deputy Giles Shilson joined the meeting remotely.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that – the minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk, in respect of its Terms of Reference. Members noted that this report had been produced in advance of the Policy and Resources Committee's (P&RC) consideration of Terms of Reference more generally, at its last meeting on 23rd March 2023. At this meeting, P&RC had taken a decision to separate the standards and member learning and development aspects, of the Civic Affairs Sub Committee, and transfer them into a standalone sub-committee, to be chaired by the Chief Commoner.

The Chair advised that any further proposed changes to the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference would require approval and consideration by P&RC. In order to facilitate the split referred to above, items (J) and (L-Q) in the current Terms of Reference would be removed and incorporated into the new stand-alone sub-committee, as set out in the appendix to the report.

In terms of composition, the Chair proposed that this be amended as follows:

- a) The Chairman of Finance be changed to 'Chairman of Finance or their nominee' (to reflect the current position);
- b) Four Members of the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee (elected by P&R) be changed to 'four Members nominated by P&R' (thereby allowing for appointments to come from the wider Court, not just from P&RC);
- c) The outgoing Chief Commoner to remain on the Sub Committee for a year, rather than six months.

Discussion took place in relation to the future role of the Chief Commoner in serving as Deputy Chair of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee by default, in the context of the changes being made more broadly to the existing remit. A number of Members expressed significant concerns in that, notwithstanding the fact that the functions being removed would transfer to a Committee being chaired by the Chief Commoner, some of the remaining functions of Civic Affairs would still present a strong case for the Chief Commoner remaining as Deputy Chairman. Members felt that there had been some misunderstandings historically in term of the Chief Commoners role and that this proposal might be contentious.

Whilst noting the Sub Committee's concerns, the Chair asked Members to be mindful of practicalities in respect of the decision-making process, noting that the Chief Commoner would continue to be involved closely with all hospitality related matters. Furthermore, the proposal would still allow for the Policy and Resources Committee to appoint the Chief Commoner as Deputy Chairman of the Civic Affairs Sub Committee; it was a question of providing P&RC with the discretion to make the decision. Members noted this but made clear the majority position of the Sub Committee, in respect of opposing this specific proposal, and asked for their views to be taken into account by P&RC at the appropriate point.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The Terms of Reference of the Civic Affairs Sub Committee, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved, noting that:
 - a) Items (J) and (L-Q) be removed and incorporated into the new stand-alone Sub Committee.
 - b) the composition be changed as follows: i.e. the Chairman of Finance or their nominee; Four Members nominated by P&R and the immediate past Chief Commoner to remain on the Sub Committee for a year.
2. The Frequency of the meetings be reviewed in due course, following an analysis of the types of reports presented to the Civic Affairs Sub Committee and to the new Stand-alone Sub Committee.

5. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Sub Committee received the Work Programme and noted the items appearing on this agenda and updates on the following :

- Workspace requirements – had been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee the previous week and the funding gap had been filled.
- Court of Common Council Arrangements for Members – Members would receive an update at the May meeting of the Sub Committee.

6. **MEMBERS' BEDROOM POLICY**

The Assistant Town Clerk was heard, following a number of recent queries about the Members' Bedroom Policy. Members noted that this had not been updated since 2016 and a review would be timely. Recent queries had included the outdated list of those eligible to use the rooms; noise issues; guests and pets; etc. The Sub Committee agreed that the Assistant Town Clerk should undertake a short review of the Policy, in the interests of providing clarity and/or options for Members to consider. The Chair asked Members to be mindful of Equality implications relating to any policy decision on this matter.

7. **MEMBERS' FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY AND SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE: UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Deputy Town Clerk in respect of two related pieces of work on financial support for Members; i.e. - the Members' Financial Support Policy and the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). The report provided an update on the work underway in these areas, including a proposal to end acceptance of late payment claims by default. Members noted that any agreed changes would come into effect for the next financial quarter, thereby giving three months' notice.

RESOLVED, that:

1. Acceptance of late payment claims by default be ceased forthwith under the Members' Financial Support Policy, with cases to be decided on an exceptional basis (with such consideration delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair). NB. *If a Member has logged a concern or query with the Administering Body, then it should be allowed to run its course and not be referred by exception.*
2. The ongoing work being undertaken on the Special Responsibility Allowance and expedited timescales be noted.

8. **MEMBER TRANSPORT PROTOCOL**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Deputy Town Clerk in respect of the Member Transport Protocol, which highlighted areas where updates might be helpful and invited Members to comment. Although this had not been reviewed since 2011, Members noted that it had worked well.

The Chair observed that, in practice, the Finance Committee Chair had rarely had call to use the cars over the past several years, and the Sub-Committee felt, therefore, that explicit reference to that role going forwards was unnecessary and should be deleted. It was clarified that, should any Member need transport in order to fulfil a City Corporation duty, then this would continue to be provided in the most practical and cost-effective way, in line with the terms of the protocol. Additionally, it was clarified that the Town Clerk would consult with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Civic Affairs Sub Committee in the event of any conflicts of interest in terms of car use (rather than the Chief Commoner solely, as currently set out).

RESOLVED, that - the updated Protocol at Appendix 2 to the report be approved, subject to deletion of explicit reference to the Chairman of Finance and to references to consultation with the Chief Commoner being changed to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee.

9. **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Comptroller and City Solicitor in respect of the City of London Corporation's current Members' Code of Conduct and the Local Government Association ("LGA") Model Councillor Code of

Conduct, which Members had reviewed in October and December 2022. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Any proposed new Code would need to be approved by the Policy and Resources Committee and adopted by the Court of Common Council.
- b) In respect of declaring interests and participation in meetings, the LGA takes a firm stance on this. However, under the City Corporation's Code, if a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest and no dispensation, they can remain in the room but cannot speak or vote, unless the Nolan Principles state otherwise. Similarly, if a Member has a Non-pecuniary interest, then they too can participate, unless the Nolan Principles state otherwise.
- c) Members also noted how restrictions in respect of friends, relatives and close associates had been difficult to enforce under the previous regime, and this too had not been applied to the City Corporation's Code.
- d) The Chair advised that the matter of compulsory/non-compulsory Code of Conduct training had been discussed at the last meeting of the Member Development Steering Group, where a clear view was expressed in that this should be compulsory. Members noted that this might necessitate a change to Standing Orders and further exploration by the new stand-alone 'Standards and Training' Sub Committee, as referred to above under the 'Terms of Reference' report.
- e) The Comptroller and City Solicitor advised that mandatory training applies to Members before they can hear applications at Planning and Licensing Committees. Given that it is for the Court of Common Council to determine who is appropriate to serve on its Committees, it is reasonable to impose certain conditions, such as mandatory training, so long as they are non-discriminatory and applied fairly.
- f) Training across all Committees was offered after the 2022 Elections but there are a number of in-year bi-elections and Aldermanic elections. The sessions were recorded but Members agreed that it is important to make newcomers feel as included as possible, noting pressures on their time. Members reported that 'emergency training' had been successful when they were appointed in-year to the Planning and Transportation Committee. The Comptroller and City Solicitor also offered this, as and when required, in respect of the Code of Conduct.

Having considered and commented on the latest version of the draft Code of Conduct, it was RESOLVED that:

1. The current arrangements for declarations and participation in meetings, where disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests are engaged should be retained.
2. Training in the Code of Conduct to be mandatory.

10. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Assistant Town Clerk provided an oral update on this matter, advising that work had commenced in respect of a review in this area, with an initial version of a full updated Schedule of Outside Bodies, including the different appointing mechanisms and more detailed information. Members noted that this would enable them to decide whether or not to continue engagement and agreed to receive a new, succinct format at the May meeting of the Sub Committee.

11. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk which advised Members of the following 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):

Purchase Card Policy for The Lord Mayor and the Policy Chair – approved for implementation with effect from 1st February 2023

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no items.

At 11.55pm Members agreed to extend the Meeting to conclude the business on the agenda.

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item no (s)	Para no (s)
15-28	3

15. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that:

15.1 The non-public minutes of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee meeting on 7 February 2023 be approved.

15.2 The notes of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee Informal Strategy Session on Friday 9 December 2022 be received.

16. **BENEFICES**

The Chairman was heard Sub Committee received the following

17. **APPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE GREAT HALL**
The Sub Committee considered and approved a report of the Remembrancer.
18. **CITY HOSPITALITY COST GUIDELINES 2023/24**
The Sub Committee considered and approved a report of the Remembrancer.
19. **COMMITTEE HOSPITALITY BUDGET ALLOCATION**
The Sub Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer.
20. **APPLICATIONS FOR HOSPITALITY**
The Sub Committee considered and approved 3 applications.
21. **FORTHCOMING COMMITTEE OR COURT EVENTS INVOLVING HOSPITALITY**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Remembrancer.
22. **SUMMARY OF COMMITTED HOSPITALITY FUNDING**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Remembrancer.
23. **VARIOUS RECEPTIONS - FINAL ACCOUNTS**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Remembrancer.
24. **DELEGATED AUTHORITY REPORT**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Remembrancer.
25. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Town Clerk.
26. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**
There were no questions.
27. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
Three items were considered whilst the public were excluded
28. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED, that – the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2023 be approved.

The meeting ended at 1.10 pm

Chairman

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