

The City of London Access Group and Conservation Area Advisory Committee – Committee Update Report

Committee: Planning & Transportation Committee	Dated: 18/07/2023
Subject: Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) and City of London Access Group (CoLAG).	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	N/A
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Gwyn Richards, Planning & Development Director	For Information
Report author: Lydia Nutt, Senior Planning Officer (Design)	

Summary

This report responds to a request from Members for information on the City of London Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) and the City of London Access Group (CoLAG) which was requested at the meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee on 11 May 2023.

The report outlines the role, function, and membership of the two groups, referencing their terms of reference and constitutions.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Report

City of London Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)

Background Information:

The City of London Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) was set up by the Corporation of London in 1973 and a constitution was approved in 1982. Membership of the Committee is open to representatives of Ward Clubs, amenity bodies and City institutions and organisations by invitation of the Committee. Eleven of the City's twenty-two Ward Clubs are represented on the Committee. National conservation organisations represented include the Ancient Monuments Society, The Twentieth

Century Society and the Georgian Group. Local amenity groups represented include the City of London Historical Society and the London Society. Representatives from professional bodies include Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS and The Urban Design Group. A quorum consists of seven members of the Committee.

At the annual meeting, the election of Chair and Deputy Chair takes place and membership is reviewed. The current Chair and Deputy Chair is Frank Kensal and Edward Hagger. The Chair has a second or casting vote. There is a Secretary who receives remuneration for services and reimbursement of expenses from the account of the Planning and Transportation Committee and who is responsible for minute taking, distribution of agenda, membership records and correspondence.

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee may attend meetings in an ex officio capacity but are not voting members of the Committee. Visitors may be invited to attend meetings by resolution of the Committee.

Meetings are normally held on a three-weekly basis on a Thursday at 3.30p.m. in one of the Committee rooms in the Guildhall. At present there are 22 members of the Committee. Members are asked to attend on a regular basis or send apologies (a member is deemed to have resigned if a member fails to send apologies when absent for three consecutive meetings or fails to attend at least one meeting in six).

Officers of the Development Division of the Environment Department attend meetings to present applications to members. This involves significant planning officer resources and is under review.

The Committee is keen to have representation from as wide a cross-section of the City as possible and particularly from the Ward Clubs. Although some members of the Committee have relevant professional qualifications, the main criterion is to take an active interest in the buildings and environment of the City.

City of London Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) is an advisory body that considers applications for planning permission and advertisement consent in conservation areas in the City of London. It makes written representations on the impact of those applications on the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. These representations are recorded on file as part of the public consultation on the applications. Where relevant, these representations are brought to the attention of the Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of London Corporation when considering applications.

If any member has a financial interest either direct or indirect, otherwise than solely as a trustee, or a tangible or material interest with either a personal or corporate involvement for gains other than financial outside the Committee in any matter under discussion, they shall:

- (a) forthwith declare his interest;
- (b) not speak or vote thereon;
- (c) withdraw from the room whilst the matter is under consideration

provided that a shareholding in a body not exceeding £1,000 or one hundredth of the nominal value of the issued share capital (whichever is the less) is not a financial interest for the purposes of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c).

The rules of the Committee shall be subject to the approval of the Planning and Transportation Committee. Any amendment of these rules shall be by resolution of the Committee and shall have been circulated to all members in writing a reasonable time before the meeting. If approved, they will then be submitted to the Planning and Transportation Committee.

City of London Access Group (CoLAG):

The City of London Access Group (CoLAG), set up in 1997, is an external voluntary group that provides advice on accessibility issues within the City of London for people who live, work, or visit. Currently, they have a Chair and around 20 members with a variety of lived experience of disability and access issues as well as expertise in inclusive access.

The purpose of the group is to advance equality of access for disabled people and other protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 in the built environment. The Group therefore provides advice and support in relation to access and inclusive design of proposed new and existing built environment programmes and projects, including those on City's transport network, streets and public spaces. From time-to-time, it also provides advice on planning applications in the Square Mile.

The constitution and Terms of Reference for the group are outdated, having last been reviewed in 2006 with a Code of Conduct, 2005.

Typically, CoLAG provide advice in minuted meetings for major planning and other transportation projects. In recent years, the level of involvement, and number of consultations with CoLAG has been inconsistent.

An independent review of the groups Constitution and Terms of reference is currently underway, led by the Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) alongside CoL Officers from Planning and Development and City Operations. The primary objective of the review is to design a more effective model to integrate the CoLAG into the CoL's planning, highways and transport functions. In-depth discussions with CoLAG and CAE have clearly identified that for the group to be sustainable and effective, the City Corporation needs to provide CoLAG with financial and organisational support.

Officers are still taking internal advice from procurement, HR and legal teams to ensure the strategy is robust and workable and following feedback from internal stakeholders, revisions are being made to the strategy to ensure it is cost effective and affordable. Conclusion of the review is anticipated to be September 2023.