

CIVIC AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE
Thursday, 13 July 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee held at Committee Room,
West Wing, 2nd Floor West Wing on Thursday, 13 July 2023 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Tom Sleigh (Chair)
Deputy Ann Holmes (Chief Commoner) (Deputy Chair)
Deputy Keith Bottomley
Deputy Henry Colthurst
Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli
Wendy Mead
Deputy Andrien Meyers
Alderman Sir William Russell

In Attendance (observing online)

Emily Benn

Officers:

Paul Double	- City Remembrancer
Amy Austin	- Remembrancer's Department
Holly Booth	- Remembrancer's Department
Rachel Cartwright	- Remembrancer's Department
Leann Corachea	- Remembrancer's Department
Fiona Hoban	- Remembrancer's Department
Gregory Moore	- Assistant Town Clerk and Executive Director, Governance and Member Services
Andrew Buckingham	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Gettleson	- Town Clerk's Department
Christopher Rumbles, Clerk	- Town Clerk's Department
Peter Oscher	- City Surveyor's Department
Dorian Price	- City Surveyor's Department
Benjamin Chen-Sverre	- Chamberlain's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Christopher Hayward, Sophie Fernandes, Tijs Broeke and James Bromiley Davis.

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

There were none.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that – the minutes of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee meeting on 31st March 2023 be approved as an accurate record, subject to the following amendments.

James Bromiley Davis to be recorded as ‘in attendance observing remotely’.

Item 16 Benefices to read ‘The Chairman was heard’ and removing the words ‘Sub-Committee received the following’.

4. MEMBERS' BEDROOM POLICY

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Deputy Town Clerk setting out existing booking terms and eligibility, current charging levels and usage for the Members’ bedrooms and seeking a view on a number of matters for consideration, in order for a revised policy to be drafted and brought back for Members’ further consideration.

During the discussion that followed, there was general agreement that the existing policy remained appropriate. The current pricing level was noted, but with there being a need to ensure all costs were being covered where an overnight stay was for non-official usage.

There was a question raised over eligibility and those permitted to stay in the bedrooms e.g., Masters and Livery Clerks. There was a request for more detailed utilisation statistics and data to understand more fully how the bedrooms were being used and by whom. It was suggested that bedrooms might only be offered externally during a period of under usage. A clear definition of official usage would be needed when allowing free use of the bedrooms, with this being when a Member was chairing an early morning meeting or hosting a dinner finishing late at night.

In conclusion, it was noted that Members were in favour of reviewing the schedule of charges with a view to increasing the fee to ensure costs were covered for non-official use, there was agreement that official usage should remain as free but with a tightening up around what constitutes official usage. Members expressed an interest in receiving a breakdown of usage by external users of the bedrooms to inform a decision on the approved list of external users.

The Assistant Town Clerk questioned whether a formal procedure was considered necessary to address any potential misuse during an overnight stay, with the Chairman agreeing that wording should be drafted to be included within the policy. Members were also in agreement that block bookings of the bedrooms should not be permitted.

The Deputy Chairman commented on a need for a clear communications plan to inform Members of any changes. It was agreed that a report would come to the next meeting for Members’ further consideration.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Provided feedback and set out their views on the Members' Bedroom Policy in respect of issues identified in the report; in particular, the questions set out at paragraph 26.

5. **MEMBER WORKSPACE ARRANGEMENTS (MEZZANINE FLOOR)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Deputy Town Clerk providing an update on development of new workspace arrangements and ongoing efforts in looking to ensure suitable resources and facilities were available to all Members whilst at Guildhall on City Corporation business.

Members were supportive of the installation of soundproof booths at Guildhall, with these offering a personal and quiet space from which Members could take confidential calls when at Guildhall on City Corporation business.

Members expressed their view for the soundproof booths to be installed in the small office on the 2nd Floor, West Wing, opposite Committee Room 3, which currently acted as designated office space for Chairs. It was noted that the new desk space made available on the Mezzanine would ensure that there was no loss of working space available to potentially affected Members. Members were also keen to ensure the soundproof pods had power outlets and some sort of cooling device, to ensure Members could work comfortably and effectively within them. The City Surveyor confirmed that the pods in question each had one 3-pin plug socket plus two USB sockets and would come equipped with cooling fans.

Members were supportive of the installation of soundproof booths but raised a concern regarding the initial indicative cost of installation of booths being in the region of £4,000 per booth, subject to a final quote. Members agreed to the Town Clerk and City Surveyor progressing the installation, whilst asking that further negotiation takes place with the supplier in looking to achieve a reduction in the overall cost of each pod.

Members acknowledged that hotdesking space was already available to Members, with this hardly being used. It was suggested that installation of soundproof booths would provide Members with more opportunity to come into Guildhall, providing a suitable environment for them.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Provided a view as to how they wish to take forward Members' space.
- Agreed to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair, to consider cost breakdowns when available from the City Surveyor and to authorise such expenditure as required (from the Sub-Committee's contingency fund) to deliver Members' expectations for both the Parental Room and Member Workspace.

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

There were none.

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

The following additional item of business was raised.

City Belonging Project – Members noted that a new worker engagement initiative had been launched at the end of June looking to engage every workplace and City worker, not just senior leadership teams. Efforts had been made at sourcing an equality contact at each City firm.

City businesses had received an invitation to the City Corporation's Pride Reception, with a huge number choosing to attend and this being a model that would be followed for future events. It was hoped that there would be scope to expand a number of future events for community engagement taking place across Guildhall, Old Bailey, Mansion House and Barbican Centre. There was also scope to look the potential of co-sponsoring of events in looking to cover some of the associated costs of these.

The Chair welcomed all the work that was taking place in this area, with the potential for co-sponsorship of events to be welcomed. A Member added how strong and positive work was already taking place in this area.

Members noted the update.

8. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That – the public be excluded for the following matters that relate to functions of the Court of Common Council which are not subject to the provisions of Part VA and Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, relating to public access to meetings.

9. **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE: UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Deputy Town Clerk providing an update on implementation of a Special Responsibility Allowance.

10. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the non-public minutes of the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee meeting on 31 March 2023 be approved as an accurate record.

11. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDERS 41(A) AND 41(B)**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk detailing decisions taken under delegated authority or urgency powers in accordance with standing orders 41(a) and 41(b).

12. **DELEGATED AUTHORITY REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Remembrancer detailing decisions taken under delegation to the Remembrancer, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair.

13. **BENEFICES**

The Chair was heard.

14. **GUILDHALL CHARGING REVIEW**
The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer relating to a Guildhall Charging Review.
15. **GUIDANCE NOTE FOR CHAIRMEN ON COMMITTEE HOSPITALITY**
The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer providing a guidance note for Chairmen on committee hospitality.
16. **CITY EVENTS PROGRAMME**
The Sub-Committee received a report of the Remembrancer setting out the process by which the programme of City events at Guildhall was generated.
17. **APPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE GREAT HALL**
The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer detailing applications for the use of the Great Hall.
18. **APPLICATIONS FOR HOSPITALITY**
The Sub-Committee considered various applications for hospitality as follows:
 - a) **Application A**
 - b) **Application B**
 - c) **Application C**
19. **EVALUATION OF CITY-HOSTED EVENTS**
The Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer providing a summary of evaluation following City-hosted events since December 2022.
20. **UPDATE TO CITY CORPORATION FLAG POLICY**
The Sub-Committee received an update to the City Corporation flag policy.
21. **CITY CORPORATION'S WINE STORE**
The Sub-Committee received a report of the Remembrancer providing an update on the current position of the City Corporation's wine store.
22. **FORTHCOMING COMMITTEE OR COURT EVENTS INVOLVING HOSPITALITY AND OTHER NON-HOSPITALITY EVENTS**
The Sub-Committee received a report of the Remembrancer providing detail of forthcoming committee or Court events involving hospitality and other non-hospitality events.
23. **SUMMARY OF COMMITTED HOSPITALITY FUNDING**
The Sub-Committee received a joint report of the Remembrancer and Chamberlain providing an update on the level of actual and committed expenditure.
24. **VARIOUS RECEPTIONS - FINAL ACCOUNTS**

The Sub-Committee received a joint report of the Remembrancer and Chamberlain comparing outturn for events overseen by the Sub-Committee against the budget.

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

A Member raised a point relating to the format of speeches at events.

26. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

The Remembrancer provided detail relating a potential hospitality event.

The meeting ended at 3.15pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Chris Rumbles
christopher.rumbles@cityoflondon.gov.uk