

## Report – Policy and Resources Committee

# Report of Urgent Action Taken: Appointment of Honorary Water Bailiff

*To be presented on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons*

### **SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN**

At its meeting on 19 October 2023, Policy and Resources Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer relating to the Lord Mayor Elect's Mayoral theme for the year: "Connect to Prosper", and a proposal to appoint an Honorary Water Bailiff for his year in office.

Policy and Resources Committee agreed to the appointment of an Honorary Water Bailiff in support of the Lord Mayor's Mayoral Theme and to put forward a recommendation to Court of Common Council thereon.

### **MAIN REPORT**

From the 12<sup>th</sup> century until the passage of the Thames Conservancy Act in 1857, the City of London Corporation was responsible for the conservation of the River Thames from Staines in the west to Yantlet Creek in the east, including the control and regulation of fishing and, later, improvements to navigation.

While the responsibility for the Thames conservancy was officially vested in the Lord Mayor, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century he was given the power to appoint a sub conservator to assist in these duties.

From the role of sub conservator developed the post of Water Bailiff, which was essentially a law enforcement officer in respect of the river (policing fishing; seeking out nuisances; inspecting locks; removing sunk boats and barges; collecting fines imposed by the Lord Mayor and supervising the sale of fish within the City etc). The postholder ranked as one of the Lord Mayor's esquires and was elected by the Court of Common Council. The Office became defunct when the Conservancy over the Thames was transferred to the Thames Conservancy by the 1857 Act. However, provisions governing the Office including regulations approved by the Court of Common Council in 1824 are still extant along with provision of a salary to be paid that forbade the appointee from holding any other office or employment.

As part of his Mayoral theme "Connect to Prosper", the Lord Mayor Elect will be undertaking a number of initiatives relating to the River Thames, long the main connection between the City and the rest of the World. Current proposals include a visit to the London Stone in Staines-Upon-Thames in June 2024, Sheriffs Ahoy and

an event supporting the Wetwheels Foundation, a charity that gives sailing opportunities to people with disabilities on their fleet of specially adapted boats.

To support him in these initiatives in a ceremonial capacity the Lord Mayor Elect wishes to appoint an individual with strong maritime links to the position of Honorary Water Bailiff for his year in office.

During Policy and Resources Committee's consideration of the item, it was noted that certain provisions governing the Office of Water Bailiff and the duties/functions of the Office were now performed by other regulatory bodies. Policy and Resources Committee were invited to agree that none of the extant provisions should apply to the appointment of a Water Bailiff in an honorary capacity.

Policy and Resources Committee endorsed the appointment of an Honorary Water Bailiff to work in support of the Lord Mayor Elect's Mayoral Theme "Connect to Prosper", whilst further agreeing that none of the extant provisions governing the now defunct office of Water Bailiff should apply in respect of such an appointment and with a recommendation being made to Court of Common Council accordingly.

The next formal Court of Common Council meeting was not due to be held until Thursday 7 December 2023, at which point the Mayoral year would have begun.

Accordingly, a decision of Court of Common Council was sought and obtained under urgency procedure to allow time for arrangements to be put in place and for an appointment to be made to coincide with the Admission of Lord Mayor being held on Friday 10 November 2023 and the start of the Mayoral Year, approving as follows:

- The Lord Mayor may appoint an honorary Water Bailiff and that none of the extant provisions governing the now defunct office of Water Bailiff should apply in respect of such an appointment.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- We **recommend** that the action taken be noted.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November 2023.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

**Deputy Christopher Hayward**  
Chairman, Policy and Resources Committee