

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Dispensations Sub-Panel	Dated: 28 th April 2025
Subject: Request for a Dispensation under the Corporation's approved Dispensations Policy	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: This application must be considered in accordance with policy and guidance on the granting of dispensations under the Members' Code of Conduct.	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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:	Town Clerk
Report author:	Kate Doidge, Governance Officer

Summary

This report sets out details of a Member who has requested a dispensation as detailed below and in the dispensation application form appended.

Recommendation(s)

The Sub-Panel is asked to consider the application for a dispensation submitted as detailed below and appended and make recommendations thereon to the Town Clerk.

Main Report

Background

1. A Member has submitted an application for a dispensation. The application is submitted in accordance with the current dispensations policy. The statutory grounds for granting a dispensation under the Localism Act 2011, and the factors that your Sub-Panel should take into account when considering these applications, are set out and explained in this policy.

Current Position

2. The full application for the dispensation is appended to this report at Appendix 1 and this covering report provides a summary of the dispensation sought.

Proposals

3. **Gregory Lawrence** is a Common Councillor representing the Ward of Farringdon Without. He has requested a dispensation to speak on all matters concerning the London Central Markets (i.e., Smithfield) other than:
 - (i) Those in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest as a shareholder or director of any company which holds a tenancy in the market; and
 - (ii) Those which would affect only him personally or his business interests as opposed to the generality of the tenants within the market.
4. Mr. Lawrence's [Register of Interests](#) detail that his employment is as a Director of G Lawrence Wholesale Meats Ltd. He also holds two Corporate Tenancies at 23 East Market Building London Central Markets, London, EC1 A 9PQ (G Lawrence Wholesale Meats Ltd.) and Suite B East Market Building London Central Markets London EC1A 9PQ (Smithfield Market Tenants' Association Management Offices). Further, his non-pecuniary interests detail that he is a Member of the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association.
5. The request has been made for an indeterminate period of time. For clarification, as per paragraph 7 of the dispensations policy, a dispensation must specify the period for which it has effect, which may not exceed four years.
6. Gregory Lawrence has made the request in the following grounds:

"The Court of Common Council has requested that the decision maker "...adopt a position where members would generally be granted a dispensation to speak (but not vote) on all matters concerning their ward where they have an engaged disclosable pecuniary interest other than when that disclosable pecuniary interest would be directly and materially impacted by a matter to be determined at a meeting of the Court or one of its committees or sub-committees, subject of course to the proper exercise of statutory discretion in each case".

I have been an elected Councillor to the Ward of Farringdon Without, which includes the London Central Markets since 1994 and have a deep understanding of the Smithfield area having worked at the market for over 40 years. I also believe that local electors voted for me because they believe that I would speak for them on issues affecting their business.

I believe that the caveat that I have placed on my request for a dispensation, which has already been in place for several years – that I would not speak on any matter which directly impacted me or my business interests specifically as opposed to the generality of market tenants – will ensure that I am not placed in a position where there is a personal conflict of interests.

I consider that my application would fall under the category of “it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation”.

7. As alluded to in his application, Mr. Lawrence was previously granted a dispensation to speak on all matters concerning the London Central Markets (i.e. Smithfield), other than: (i) those in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest as a shareholder or director of any company which holds a tenancy in the market; and (ii) those which would affect only him personally or his business interests as opposed to the generality of the tenants within the market. This was granted by the Dispensations Sub-Panel in March 2021, until the next general election of the Court¹, or March 2026 (whichever was sooner). As per paragraph (k) of Appendix 3 of the guidance, the decision maker must consider each application on its own merits. However, it is beneficial for all concern for there to be a consistent approach to applications made in similar circumstances, and the decision maker will therefore have due regard to previous decisions, always acknowledging that the consensus can change over time.
8. At the time of writing this report², Mr. Lawrence is currently a member of Corporate Services Committee, the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Sub-Committee, the Joint Consultative Committee, the Markets Board, the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee, and the Senior Remuneration Sub-Committee. His application is attached at full at Appendix 1.
9. Whilst the Town Clerk is able to determine dispensations in respect of requests to:
 - Speak and vote on the setting of Council Tax
 - Speak as a member of the public on planning applications
 - Speak as a member of the public on licensing applications
 - Speak on general housing matters
10. The request submitted fall outside the parameters under which the Town Clerk is able to solely determine dispensations and must therefore be considered by this Sub-Panel in accordance with the existing policy on the granting of dispensations, with recommendations thereon made to the Town Clerk.

Corporate & Strategic Implications –

Strategic implications – None in the context of this report.

Financial implications – None in the context of this report.

¹ The general election of the Court of Common Council was held on 20th March 2025.

² The Court of Common Council meets on 25th April 2025 to reconstitute its Committees and appoint membership. This list therefore may be subject to change. The Town Clerk can advise of any changes to the Panel at the meeting.

Resource implications – None in the context of this report.

Legal implications – Set out in the policy and guidance on the granting of dispensations.

Risk implications – None in the context of this report.

Equalities implications – None in the context of this report.

Climate implications - None in the context of this report.

Security implications – None in the context of this report.

Conclusion

11. The Sub-Panel are asked to consider the application for a dispensation summarised above and appended and make recommendations thereon to the Town Clerk.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Gregory Lawrence Dispensation Application

Kate Doidge

Town Clerk's Department

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