

**COMMUNICATIONS & CORPORATE AFFAIRS SUB (POLICY & RESOURCES)**  
**COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 5 February 2025**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub (Policy & Resources) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 16.00pm**

**Present**

**Members:**

Jason Groves (Chair)  
Deputy Christopher Hayward (Deputy  
Chairman)  
Deputy Keith Bottomley  
Deputy Peter Dunphy  
Helen Fentimen OBE JP

Deputy Madush Gupta  
Deputy Shravan Joshi MBE  
Alderman Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP  
Deputy Charles Edward Lord  
Deputy James Thomson CBE

**Officers:**

Paul Wright	- City Remembrancer
Dionne Corradine	- Chief Strategy Officer
Mark Gettleson	- Communications and External Affairs
Sam Hutchings	- Communications and External Affairs
Sam Hutchings	- Communications and External Affairs
Mark Mistry	- Communications and External Affairs
Kristy Sandino	- Communications and External Affairs
Lisa Ward	- Communications and External Affairs
Rob McNicol	- Environment Department
Daniel O'Byrne	- Innovation and Growth
Isaac Thomas	- Town Clerk's Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received by Deputy Keith Bottomley, Deputy Shravan Joshi, Tijs Broeke, Caroline Haines and Dame Susan Langley.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**4. OUTSTANDING REFERENCES**

The Chair stated that the outstanding references would be covered during the consideration of the agenda items.

The Deputy Chairman requested an update on the Switching Off the Lights campaign. Officers responded that this would be taken to the Planning & Transportation Committee on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, followed by a further update to be provided to the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

5. **CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UPDATE REPORT**

The Sub-Committee considered a Joint Report of the Chief Strategy Officer and the Remembrancer regarding an update on the Department's work.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Members suggested that the reference on page 19 of the agenda to the policy priorities of the Policy Chairman should be amended in future versions of the report to indicate that they are the City Corporation's policy priorities rather than the Policy Chairman's personal priorities. This request was noted by officers.
- Members were informed that, since the writing of the report, the Faith in the City programme was launched successfully on 3 February, with funding being provided through the Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund. This research and engagement programme would look at the inter-faith needs of the Square Mile in terms of what is provided in other cities and business districts, as well as internationally.
- It was noted that the City Question Time Budget Special had received positive feedback. Members were pleased with the transparency and experimentation with the format but suggested that care should be taken not to clash with other residential meetings in the future.
- Members were informed that the new Ward List would be published on or before 15 February, and that this would be the highest in a decade. Members commended the success in increasing electoral registration.
- A Member expressed concern that launching the candidate guide in early March would be too late given that the Ward elections themselves were due to take place on 19/20 March. An officer reassured the Member that this was an error in the report and that this information would be promoted at an earlier date.
- The Chair requested an update on the CRM tool and its rollout. Officers explained that several departments were feeding into this work and that they were hopeful it would transform the Corporation's ability to engage.
- Members expressed their gratitude to the Director of Campaigns and Engagement and the wider team, for their hard work and success in engaging with residents, businesses and communities across the Square Mile.
- Officers updated the Sub-Committee on their plans to consult and engage with workers and workplaces on mental health. This would include establishing points of contact in every business and potentially establishing a model to find out the mental health provision needs across the City. A Member highlighted that this would require significant

resources and may incur large costs. Officers responded that the team was looking to use resources that are already available.

- The Chair commended the use of statistics as part of the media relations update but queried the robustness of sentiment analysis. The Chair agreed to pick this up with officers ahead of the next meeting.
- Members discussed the need to extend the Corporation's networks and reach the broadest audience across all forms of media, noting that LinkedIn was now the Corporation's primary social media platform in terms of engagement. Members discussed potential ways to harness LinkedIn's capabilities, such as sending out targeted invitations to City events. Officers were supportive of the Sub-Committee's suggestions and updated Members on the ongoing plans to develop a bespoke proactive content strategy.
- The Chair thanked the team for their work.

**RESOLVED**, That the report be received and its contents noted.

6. **POLITICAL PARTY CONFERENCES 2024/2025**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Chief Strategy Officer and the Remembrancer updating Members in relation to party conference attendance in 2024 and asking for the endorsement of recommended proposals for party conferences attendance 2025 to be submitted for approval by Policy and Resources Committee.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Members agreed that the wording of the recommendation that Members attending party conference should travel 'second class,' should be amended to 'standard class.'
- A Member queried the proposal to monitor any party conference where the party has more than 10 MPs, suggesting that this would preclude officer monitoring for parties such as Reform and SNP, which are influential despite having less than 10 MPs. Officers assured Members that all parties were subject to regular desk monitoring and that the proposed number of 10 MPs would remain open to discussion in the future.
- A Member suggested that, in future reports, party names should not be used, with the parties instead being referred to as the Party of Government and HM Official Opposition, respectively.
- With regards to the recommendation that the Policy Chairman and four additional Members would be selected to attend the parties in Opposition conference, a Member proposed that the selection process should facilitate the attendance of Members involved in particular areas of work (such as Planning & Transportation, the Police, Finance, Community & Children's Services and Innovation and Growth).
- A Member suggested that it would be beneficial for cultural engagement to be added as part of the programme of engagement at the Party in

Government's conference in 2025. Officers responded that this was being discussed internally.

**RESOLVED,** That Members,

1. Note the initial summary of 2024 activity;
2. Approve the following proposals for 2025 party conference programme:
  - One fringe event and an additional event (reception) at Liberal Democrat Conference.
  - One fringe event and an additional event (dinner) at the Conservative Party Conference (HM Official Opposition).
  - Two fringe events and an additional event (dinner) at Labour Party Conference (Party of Government).
  - Officer monitoring any party conference where the party has more than 10 MPs.
  - Member attendance at party conference will be considered for any party with more than 20 MPs.
3. Approve a change to the Member and officer delegation travelling to party conferences, whereby:
  - The Policy Chairman and four (4) additional Members selected through an Expression of Interest process for the parties in Opposition. Selected Members will be eligible for a two-day commercial guest party conference pass.
  - No change to the Member delegation size for the Party in Government's conference. All Members of the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee are invited to attend as City Corporation representatives and are eligible for a two-day commercial guest party conference pass.
  - A business case is provided to the Policy Chairman and the Chair of Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub Committee for proposed officer attendance at conference.
4. Approve that one (1) Business Day pass is secured for the Policy Chairman use at each conference in 2025.
5. Approve that Members attending party conference should travel standard class on train journeys less than 2 hours.

**7. PARLIAMENTARY TEAM UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the City Remembrancer updating Members on the main elements of the Parliamentary Team's previous and planned activity in support of the City of London Corporation's political and parliamentary engagement since the last formal update to the Sub-Committee on 28 November 2024.

Members were updated as follows:

- Following a decision at the Court of Common Council, the City of London Corporation had submitted a Private Bill to Parliament to demarketise the sites of Billingsgate and Smithfield. This Bill had progressed through the House of Commons, with a formal first reading on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 and a second reading on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025, and the next stage would be the Committee Stage. Two petitions against the Bill were also received.
- The Sub-Committee was provided with an update on several Select Committee Enquiries in which the Corporation intended to present evidence. These included an enquiry on Soft Power by the Foreign Affairs Committee, Export-Led Growth by the Business and Trade Committee, EU-UK Reset by the Lords Economic Affairs Committee, Protecting World Heritage by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Animal and Plant Health Biosecurity by DEFRA, Industrial Strategy by the Business and Trade Committee and an enquiry on AI in Financial Services.
- Members were informed of a consultation that was launched in relation to proposals for a Cyber Security and Resilience Bill which had been announced in the King's Speech. The government's proposals were for a ban on ransomware payments for public sector bodies and critical national infrastructure.

**RESOLVED**, That the report be received and its contents noted.

#### 8. **INNOVATION AND GROWTH QUARTERLY REPORT**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Innovation and Growth which presented the impact of the City of London Corporation's work in support of UK Financial and Professional Services between October 2024 and January 2025. It gave Members of the Committee visibility of the outcomes of workstreams in the last quarter and upcoming areas of work in the Innovation and Growth (IG) Department, working in close collaboration with Corporate Affairs, Media, the Remembrancer's Office, the Office of the Policy Chairman and Mansion House. It also provided an annual update on Innovation and Growth's Overseas Offices for the 2024 calendar year.

**RESOLVED**, That Members,

1. Note the update on key pieces of work that have taken place between October 2024 and January 2025, and their outputs.
2. Note the update on the work that has taken place in IG's overseas offices in the 2024 calendar year.

#### 9. **BECKFORD AND CASS STATUE PROJECT WEBPAGES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Culture providing an update on the Beckford and Cass statue plaques project and containing a preview of what would be published on the City Corporation's webpages as part of the 'Retain and Explain' approach.

**RESOLVED**, That the report be received and its contents noted.

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

There were no questions.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

12. **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 the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 were approved.

14. **BECKFORD AND CASS STATUE PROJECT WEBPAGES**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Head of Culture providing an update on the Beckford and Cass statue plaques project.

15. **MARKETS COMMUNICATION APPROACH**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Chief Strategy Officer and the Remembrancer outlining the communications strategy in relation to the decision made by the Court of Common Council to cease the Markets Co-Location Programme and close the Smithfield and Billingsgate market sites.

17. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no urgent items.

19. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 were approved as a correct record.

**The meeting closed at 17.39pm**

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Chairman

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