

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDS SUB COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8 July 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Member Development and Standards Sub Committee
held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 8 July 2025
at 2.00 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Henry Pollard, Chief Commoner (Chair)
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Deputy Chair)
Sandra Jenner
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP

Officers:

Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Isaac Thomas	- Town Clerk's Department
Kate Doidge	- Town Clerk's Department
Kevin Colville	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department

The Chairman welcomed those Members that were new to the Member Development and Standards Sub Committee and extended his personal thanks and those of the Sub-Committee to Deputy Peter Dunphy for his support and contributions during his time as Chief Commoner and Chairman.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Peter Dunphy, Alderman Alison Gowman, Deputy Christopher Hayward, Deputy Jaspreet Hodgson, Tim McNally, Naresh Sonpar and Deputy James Thomson.

2. MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. ELECTION OF A DEPUTY CHAIR

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chair in accordance with Standing Order 26.

Deputy Helen Fentimen, as the only Member expressing their willingness to serve, was duly elected as Deputy Chairman for the year ensuing.

RESOLVED, that - Deputy Helen Fentimen be elected Deputy Chairman of the Member Development & Standards Sub-Committee for the year ensuing.

4. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2025 be approved as a correct record.

5. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PANEL OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk presenting recent activity undertaken by the Panel of Independent Persons in relation to both Complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct and applications for dispensation since May 2024. The report also contained details of the Panel's recent recruitment activity and a request for a review of the Independent Person's day rate.

A Member indicated that, in reviewing the Independent Person's day rate, it would be useful to know how regularly the Panel had sat and what they were paid on average. It would also be useful to consider the day rate paid by comparators in the market for similar independent panels, in order to assess whether the City Corporation should pay the same, less or more to its own Independent Person's. Officers confirmed that the total cost over the last year was £2,500 and agreed that it would be useful to consider the views of other major bodies in this area, such as the civil service, in order to benchmark the data.

Members were mindful that the day rate had remained unchanged since the Panel's inception in January 2021 and therefore suggested that it be lifted to align with CPI (Consumer Price Index), as had been done previously with Member's Allowances. This would be subject to further data on comparators' day rates to ensure that the City Corporation's day rate was not out of kilter with other bodies. This recommendation would be made to the Policy and Resources Committee for further discussion ahead of its presentation to the Court of Common Council.

The Chairman sought clarity on the process that would be undertaken to fill the Panel's vacancies. Officers indicated that up to 4 new Independent Person's would be elected to the Panel, with interviews and a selection panel likely to take place in September 2025, followed by a recommendation to the Court towards the end of the year.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Noted the report.
- Recommended to the Policy & Resources Committee that the Independent Person's day rate be increased to align with CPI.

6. **REVIEW OF THE 2025 MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk providing a review of the Member Induction and Refresher Programme that was delivered for new and returning Members immediately following the Ward elections on 19/20th March 2025 up until Summer recess, 2025.

Members were invited to provide feedback on the induction programme, reflect on lessons learned and provide suggestions on how future inductions could be improved, particularly in terms of the focus and timing of events.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) Members thanked officers for their hard work and provided broadly positive feedback on the induction programme in terms of its organisation and design, its reach to Members and the number of subjects available. Members also commented that the content of each briefing session was carefully designed with recipients in mind and that the style of delivery was clear and comprehensible.
- b) A Member queried whether, following the initial fortnightly phase of core and essential training, briefing sessions could be advertised with an indication of which Committees their content would be most relevant to. Signposting relevant Committees would enable Members to target sessions of particular importance to their own Committee interests. Officers were supportive of this suggestion and indicated that this additional detail could be incorporated into induction arrangements following the Ward elections in 2029, enabling sessions to be better tailored to Members' interests.
- c) A Member questioned whether officers had identified any particular obstacles to Members' participating in the induction programme, particularly following the intensive first couple of weeks, in terms of the timing of the briefing sessions. If any patterns or trends were identified, the Member suggested that this could help officers think flexibly about future delivery. Officers responded that the induction programme had been designed to offer a mixture of hybrid morning, lunchtime and afternoon slots around the formal schedule of committee meetings. Training was also recorded in order to provide further accessibility and flexibility. While no trends were identified, officers noted that attendance to briefing sessions did tend to tail off towards the latter stages of the programme. Anticipating this, officers had ensured that key sessions, deliberately tailored towards new Members, were scheduled earlier on in the programme.
- d) The Sub-Committee discussed the Member Buddying Scheme, which had been introduced as a recommendation from the Member Behaviour Review. The Scheme offered new Members contact with a pool of returning 'Member Buddies', who volunteered their time to help with signposting and providing advice on issues affecting the life of a Member. While Members agreed that launching the Buddying Scheme had been worthwhile, the Sub-Committee also noted that the scheme was resource intensive. It had also been difficult to monitor whether Member Buddies were engaged specifically as 'buddies' and it was noted that new Members had tended to approach the Full Court for support and advice. While acknowledging the benefits of upholding the buddying scheme in principle, Members discussed other, less resource

intensive options to administer a similar scheme in future inductions. It was suggested that the Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee membership would be best placed as buddies in future induction programmes, in place of the formal appointments process that was undertaken for the 2025 induction.

- e) Officers updated the Sub-Committee on the continuous updates being made to the Members' Portal as it was intended for the Portal to remain in place and be continually improved upon up until the next scheduled induction that would follow the Ward-elections in 2029.
- f) Officers reported that of the Full Court, 57.6% of Members had attended a Mandatory Code of Conduct training session. The Sub-Committee was concerned by the substantial number of Members that had failed to attend the compulsory training and discussed actions going forward in order to ensure compliance. It was agreed that officers would write to all Members who had not attended training on the Code, providing the link to the recording on the Members' Portal and asking that they confirm in writing once they had watched the training. Officers would highlight that the City of London Corporation had designated it as mandatory following the Code's adoption by the Court of Common Council, effective from 19th March 2025. If Members were not to comply with the training, they would therefore run the risk of contravening the standards regime.
- g) Once the raw data had been processed, it was proposed that the key attendance statistics for the induction programme be emailed to Members of the Sub-Committee in a digestible format.

RECEIVED

7. MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT - FUTURE PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk providing an update in respect of the longer-term Member Development offer following the successful delivery of the induction programme from March-July 2025.

The Chairman drew the Sub-Committee's attention to a supplementary paper providing the previous Member Learning and Development Strategy and programme of training events for 2023-2025, which the Sub-Committee would use to inform the training offer going forward.

Members were in broad agreement that the previous Learning and Development programme had worked well in providing a comprehensive and informative programme of training for all Members and suggested that the rolling programme for 2025-2026 should operate on the same quarterly themed basis as was used in the rolling programme for 2023-2025. The quarterly themes for 2023-25 were 'Leadership Skills', 'Health, Safety & Wellbeing', 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion,' and 'Data and Information.' A Member also highlighted that training on the Corporation's statutory and legal obligations would be useful, as well as the provision to all Members of an organisation-wide organogram.

With this feedback in mind, officers agreed to draw up a refreshed strategy and programme of training events, which would be presented to Members at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

RECEIVED

8. MEMBER BEHAVIOUR ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Sub-Committee heard the Town Clerk.

Members were provided with a progress update on the Member Behaviour Action Plan. Members were informed that much of the focus over the last year was geared towards actions that could be delivered as part of the Member Induction and Refresher Programme. These included a Code of Conduct review in line with the new model Code, which was implemented in March 2025, the introduction of a Member Buddying Scheme and the delivery of Mandatory Training on the Code of Conduct. A suite of actions remained on the Action Plan and would be tackled over the coming year following the delivery of the induction programme. Future actions included the development of a clear mission statement, in consultation with the Corporate Services Committee, a review of the Member/Officer Charter, and an ongoing review on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion, being led by the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Sub-Committee.

RECEIVED

9. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE

There were none.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That, the following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

An additional item of business was raised in the non-public session, relating to debts to the Guildhall Club.

13. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2025 were approved as a correct record.

The meeting ended at 2.50 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Isaac Thomas, Member Services Officer
isaac.thomas@cityoflondon.gov.uk