

COMMUNICATIONS & CORPORATE AFFAIRS SUB (POLICY & RESOURCES)
COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 8 October 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications & Corporate Affairs Sub (Policy & Resources) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Jason Groves (Chair)

Karina Dostalova

Deputy Peter Dunphy

Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP

Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP

Deborah Oliver

Deputy James Thomson CBE

James Tumbridge

Officers:

Dionne Corradine

Paul Wright

Mark Gettleson

Siobhan Harley

Kristy Sandino

Lisa Ward

Daniel O'Byrne

Ben Dunleavy

- Chief Strategy Officer

- Remembrancer

- Communications and Corporate Affairs

- Communications and Corporate Affairs

- Communications and External Affairs

- Communications

- Innovation and Growth

- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Deputy Chairman Deputy Christopher Hayward, Tijs Broeke, Alderman Tim Hailes, Deputy Caroline Haines and Alderman Prem Goyal.

Deputy Emily Benn and James Tumbridge observed the meeting virtually.

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 non-public summary of the meeting held on 29 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4. WARD COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Strategy Officer concerning communications with City workers and residents.

Introducing the report, officers said that the proposals aimed to implement regular, digital communication with City workers; it was felt this would prove to be more cost-effective than hard copies. An Annual Report, in hard copy, would

be included with the wardmote letter sent out each March (except in election years), significantly reducing costs.

The Chairman welcomed the proposal as capitalising on the strengths of the City Belonging project and the developing central corporate Customer Relationship Management system.

During discussion, Members reported feedback they had received from voters who missed the physical presence of Ward Newsletters; they suggested that hard copies could be delivered to businesses in bulk and left in shared spaces to mitigate the decline of assigned desks and mitigate a potential reluctance of mail rooms to distribute them. It was also noted that digital communication was not always effective, due to a reluctance to share email addresses and company servers blocking mass emails.

It was clarified that email addresses collected by the Electoral Services team could only be used for electoral purposes. Officers said that the City Belonging project was helping to collect email addresses that could be used for wider purposes.

A Member requested that the Annual Report contained run-on issue numbering, which had been a helpful feature of the Ward Newsletters.

A Member asked that consideration should also be given to how feedback from voters was received, saying that City Question Time had proved to be one useful venue.

RESOLVED: That Members:

- Note the report and the work undertaken since February 2023 to enhance our communications with City residents and workers, including the City Living Newsletter and City Belonging Project – and the ongoing development of the central corporate Dynamics 365 CRM.
- Endorse the reintroduction of the Ward Newsletters as a Ward Annual Report, outside of election years, enclosed with the wardmote letter.

5. 2025 ELECTION ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN REVIEW

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Strategy Officer concerning the 2025 Election Engagement Campaign.

The Chairman asked the Sub-Committee to consider which of the potential approaches at paragraphs 23a) to h) they supported as a recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee.

Several Members said that it was unfortunate that more Wards had not been contested. A Member said the report covered some issues that were already well known, such as the effect of holding elections in a system where most candidates stood as independents. They also highlighted the reports discussion of slates; the Member felt there were numerous examples of people beating a slate. They said that communication was needed to emphasise the benefits of standing unsuccessfully; this helped raise awareness of the candidate and gave them experience of the election process.

Members requested that further communication be produced for incumbent Members on the legal implications of discouraging potential candidates.

Members supported the activities listed at paragraph 23 in the report for onward recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee, with the exception of d). One Member urged caution about the involvement of officers candidate engagement and said they felt only a), b) and e) of the potential approached should be supported; even if there were concerns about the number of candidates, they felt the process should be Member-led and said that delivery using City Corporation budget and resourcing needed to be done with considerable sensitivity to avoid creating a perception that officers were encouraging certain candidates.

RESOLVED: That Members note the report and support the activities listed in the report to improve voter registration and candidate engagement in future elections.

6. CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Chief Strategy Officer and the Remembrancer providing an update on the work of the Corporate Communications and External Affairs team.

Officers provided Members with an update on events since the publication of the report, including the City Corporation's response to the 2025 Manchester synagogue attack, the launch of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Consultation and the Salisbury Square Topping Out Ceremony.

It was noted that an update on the new arrangements for party conferences would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

A Member commended officers' handling of the Hampstead Heath Ponds issue.

A Member asked why Members of the former Working Parties involved in the Beckford and Cass Statues had not been invited to the unveiling. In reply, officers said there had been a focus on Members of the Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee and senior Members, but undertook to investigate this.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and its contents noted.

7. PARLIAMENTARY TEAM UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Remembrancer concerning previous and planned activity in support of political and parliamentary engagement.

A Member noted a potential amendment to the Bill regarding parent's flexibility in taking children out of school; the Remembrancer undertook to investigate this issue.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and its contents noted.

8. MEMBERSHIPS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received a joint report of the Executive Director of Innovation & Growth, the Chief Strategy Officer, the Remembrancer and the Executive Director, Environment.

At Members request, officers undertook to respond with further on the costs and benefits of each organisation.

RESOLVED: That Members note the current memberships and subscriptions.

9. INNOVATION AND GROWTH QUARTERLY REPORTS

a) Support for UK-based Financial and Professional Service - July to September 2025

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Innovation & Growth.

RESOLVED: That Members note the update on key pieces of work between July 2025 and September 2025, and their outputs.

b) Support for UK-based Financial and Professional Service - April to June 2025

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Innovation & Growth.

RESOLVED: That Members note the update on key pieces of work between April 2025 and June 2025, and their outputs.

c) Support for UK-based Financial and Professional Service - January to March 2025

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Innovation & Growth.

RESOLVED: That Members note:

- the update on key pieces of work between July 2025 and September 2025, and their output.
- The IG Forward Look: April – July 2025.
- The review of Financial Year 2024/25.

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. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2025 were approved in the public session.

13. 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.

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

There were no questions.

15. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2025 were approved as a correct record.

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

One item of business was raised in the confidential session.

The meeting closed at 5.27 pm

Chairman

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