

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	04 December 2013
<b>Subject:</b> City of London Pocketbook – Options for the future	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For Decision</b>

### **Summary**

At the July 2013 Meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, Members requested that a survey of all Members of the Court of Common Council in respect of the City of London's Pocketbook be undertaken in order to inform a future report regarding future production of the Pocketbook, possible options for change and potential cost savings.

This report outlines the results of the survey that was undertaken in September, the current position with regards to staff and production costs associated with the Pocketbook; and also identifies a number of areas where possible improvements or savings might be realised in the future, should Members wish to examine the possibilities in greater detail.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- (i) note the contents of this report; and
- (ii) consider the establishment of a small Working Party of six Members to examine, in a task and finish approach, the potential improvements and cost savings that could be realised in the future in respect of production of the City of London Corporation's Pocketbook.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

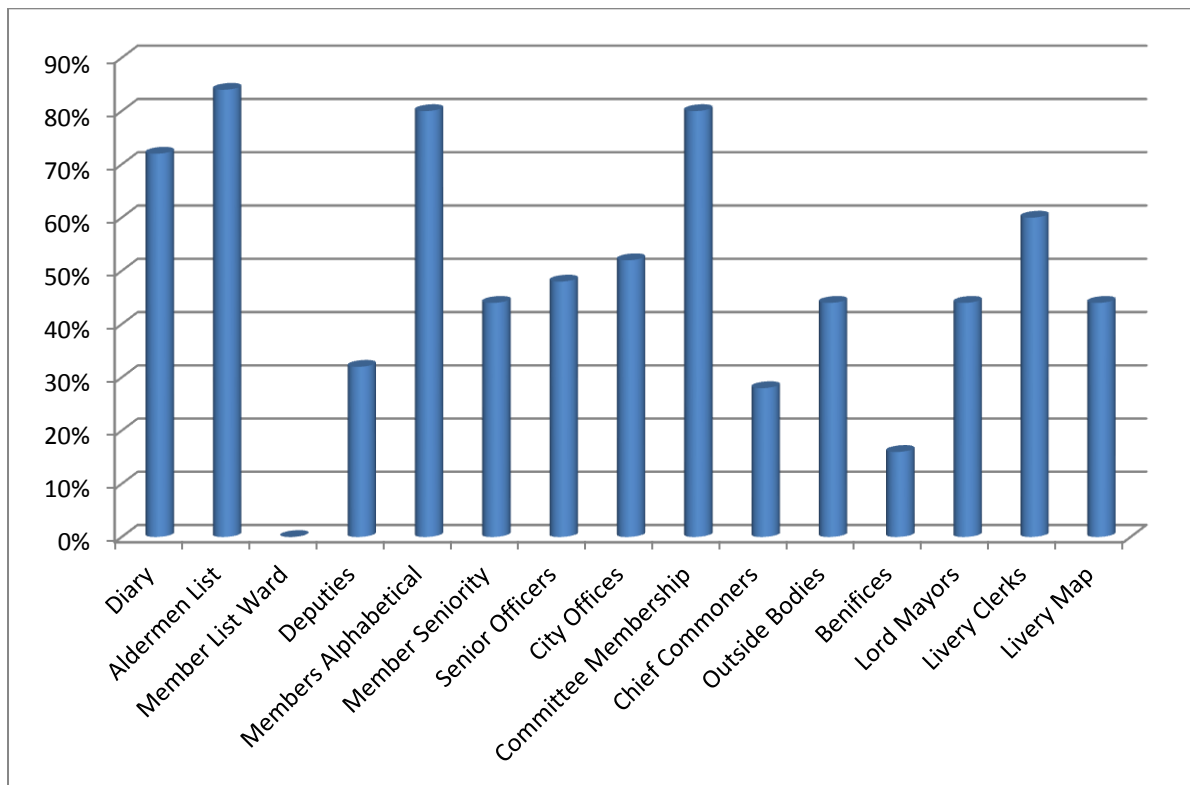
1. At the 1 July 2013 meeting of the Culture, Heritage, and Libraries Committee, Members noted the resource, cost and data inaccuracy implications associated with production of the Pocketbook. The Town Clerk commented on the forthcoming Service Based Reviews and the need to identify efficiencies across the organisation as of 2015/16. He also highlighted that much of the information contained within the Pocketbook was now readily available on-line and was automatically updated whenever data changed.
2. In response to the issues raised, the Committee requested that a comprehensive survey of all Common Councilmen be undertaken to establish

whether the Pocketbook, in its current form, was considered to be a useful tool and what information was most regularly relied upon.

### Current Position

3. The survey was conducted in September via an interactive PDF form which was sent to all Members of the Court of Common Council. The survey contained 18 questions to which either an 'often'/'rarely' or 'yes'/'no' answer could be given. Four questions also provided the opportunity for respondents to enter long-form answers and feedback.
4. Of the 125 Members of the Court of Common Council, 26 responded to both the short form and long form elements of the survey (20.8%) and 25 responded to just the short form survey (20%).
5. It was hoped that the survey would provide officers with a good overall picture of how Members use the Pocketbook i.e. those sections that are well used or rarely used. Whilst a 20% response rate makes drawing conclusions difficult, some headline facts have been extracted and are detailed below.

### 6. Graph 1 – Pocketbook use by section (%)



7. Graph 1 demonstrates that some sections of the Pocketbook are used more regularly than others. According to the survey, the four most used sections were the list of Aldermen, the Alphabetical list of Members, the list of committees (composition) and the diary section.

8. The four least used sections (those below 40%) were the list of Ward Deputies, the list of past Chief Commoners, the list of Benefices and the list of Members in Ward order.
9. The majority of respondents (72%) stated that they regularly used the diary section of the Pocketbook, despite the Committee calendar now being synchronised via Microsoft Exchange to Members' individual Outlook Email accounts and mobile devices. Additionally, an up to date meeting calendar is accessible on-line via both the intranet and the internet pages that are published through and kept up to date via Modern.gov, the Corporation's committee management software.
10. Some respondents often used the diary section but commented that they were interested in receiving e-diary training. A significant number of respondents indicated that they wanted this training regardless of how often they used the current Pocketbook Diary section (hard copy). If those people who had stated they would be interested in receiving training on electronic access to this information changed their usage habits following the e-diary training, there would most certainly be a reduction in the number of people relying on the hard copy Pocketbook for such data (to below 50%).
11. There were a number of comments within the free text section of the survey with many respondents highlighting the usefulness of some sections in the Pocketbook. However, a respondent did highlight their preference for electronically accessible information in PDF format.
12. One of the significant themes that ran through the comments was that there was support to achieve cost savings in the future by only producing a card version of the Pocketbook and cease production of the leather bound version that has historically been circulated to Members and Chief Officers. Another point raised was that Outlook appointments were much preferred to a list of dates and far easier to manage.
13. One of the inherent problems with the Pocketbook is that much of the data within it changes quickly following production and on an on-going basis throughout the year. Whilst a significant amount of time and effort is spent pre-printing to ensure that all the information is accurate, it can often have incorrect information by the time the printed copies are delivered and dispatched to Members and organisations throughout the City. Much of this data is stored and updated in Modern.gov and is automatically updated on the website and intranet pages through this package. There is a good correlation between the most used sections of the Pocketbook and those areas of data which are most likely to change, i.e. Members contact details, the committee diary and committee memberships. This information is therefore always up to date on-line and easily accessible by Members, particularly following the roll-out of iPads to Members.

## Costs

14. Due to the unique formatting of the City of London Pocketbook the costs, including binding, are particularly high for a publication of its size. In 2013, the City of London ordered 680 Pocketbooks at a total cost of £10,868.88. In addition to this, it is estimated that 130 staff hours were spent working on the Pocketbook - checking data, updating information such as Committee memberships, proof reading and ensuring all parties received their copy in good time. The cost of this staff element has been analysed and has been estimated at £2914.07, making the total cost of the 2013 Pocketbook £13,782.95. The number of hours spent is roughly equivalent to employing one full time member of staff for 3.5 weeks.
15. In addition to the above, the printing costs of the Pocketbook in 2013 can be further broken down, as follows:

	Number produced	Costs per Pocketbook	Total cost
Leather bound Pocketbook	180	£22.93	£4,127.40 (38% of the total printing cost)
Card bound Pocketbook	500	£9.86	£4930.00

16. At present, a large number of copies of the Pocketbook are printed and distributed widely each year. The 2013 distribution list for the Pocketbook can be found at Appendix 1 but it should be noted that this list does not reflect those additional copies that are circulated upon request (by exception).

### Migration to Modern.gov (committee management software)

17. In the past, production of the Pocketbook was largely automated and therefore required a smaller amount of staff input. Since migrating to the new committee management software, Modern.gov, the work involved with production of the Pocketbook has become more labour intensive as a result of the historic preference for the current format of the documentation contained within the Pocketbook.
18. Modern.gov includes functionality that will facilitate the automated production of a Pocketbook and is used by other organisations for this purpose. However, this is unlikely to match the existing format like for like. Migration to a new format would have the added advantage of minimising administrative errors as well as dramatically reducing the staff time and costs involved through the automation of the many manual tasks currently involved in the production of the Pocketbook documentation.

## Options

19. There are a number of options that Members may wish to explore with a view to making improvements to the Pocketbook, as well as realising possible cost savings and these are listed below: -
- an examination of potential benefits of automation via Modern.gov
  - the production of a slimmed down Pocketbook;
  - a reduction in Pocketbook distribution;
  - card bound Pocketbook produced only;
  - an examination of alternative formats;
  - a comparison with other authorities;
  - an examination into the creation of an electronic version of the Pocketbook and how this could complement a hard copy; and
  - an examination of further member development activities that could be provided to assist Members with electronic access to the information within the Pocketbook that regularly changes.
6. If Members agree that some or all of these avenues might be worth considering then a Working Party of six Members could be established. The below composition is proposed, although as an alternative, the Working Party could be drawn solely from this Committee. The Working Party would examine potential improvements and possible cost savings and would report back to this Committee with its recommendations in May 2014.

### **Composition of the Working Party**

Chairman of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee  
Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee (or his representative)  
The Chief Commoner  
A Member of the Policy and Resources Committee  
A Member of the Finance Committee  
A Member of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee

## Conclusion

7. Whilst the survey demonstrated a strong Member sentiment towards retaining a Pocketbook, there was also an indication within it that the ways Members are accessing data is changing. Given the cost implications of producing the Pocketbook in its current format, its demand on staff time and that there is now an automated process to aid the production of the Pocketbook through Modern.gov, it is recommended that Members consider the formation of a Working Party to examine the various potential enhancements and cost savings that could be made in the future.

## Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and consider the formation of a Working Party to examine options regarding future production of the City of London Corporation's Pocketbook.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – 2013 Pocketbook Distribution

## Appendix 1

### POCKET BOOK DISTRIBUTION 2013

Leather bound Pocketbooks	Card bound Pocketbooks
<b>TOTAL - 180</b>	<b>TOTAL - 500</b>
<b>All Members of the Court of Common Council (125)</b>	<b>Former Members (22)</b>
<b>Chief Officers and internal circulation (27)</b>	<b>Former Town Clerks (3)</b>
	<b>Officers - internal circulation (146)</b>
	<b>External representatives (71)</b> CLS Board (co-opted) (5) CLSG Board (co-opted) (5) CLFS Board (co-opted) (6) GSMD Board (co-opted) (9) Community Services (parent governors) (1) Gresham Committee – Mercers' Side (8) Sir John Cass Foundation (1) EF&C Committee – Verderers (4) West Ham Park Committee (7) Barbican Centre (6) Hampstead Heath Committee (6) Police External Members (2) Standards Committee (7) Museum of London (4) Chairman, MoL (if not CoCo Member) (1) Chairman, Livery Committee (if not CoCo Member) (1)
	Livery Committee Outside Members (12)
	Reserve Forces & Cadets Association (1)
	<u><b>Livery Companies</b></u> Masters/Clerks (including 11 that require 2 copies) (118) The Honorary Secretary The City Livery Club (1)

	<p>The Secretary, United Wards Club (1)</p> <p>The Secretary, Aldersgate Ward Club (1)</p> <p>Honorary Ward Clerks (25)</p> <p>Secretary to COL Pensioners' Association (1)</p>
	<p>Member of Parliament for City of London (1)</p>
	<p>Resident Judges at the Old Bailey, the Recorder and the Common Serjeant (12)</p>
	<p>Dean of St Paul's (1)</p> <p>The Reverend, St Lawrence Jewry (1)</p> <p>The Clerk, Bridewell Royal Hospital (1)</p> <p>The Clerk, Christ's Hospital (1)</p> <p>The Academic Registrar, Gresham College (1)</p> <p>The Headmaster, King Edwards School, Witley (1)</p> <p>The Clerk to the Trustees, Morden College (1)</p> <p>The Chancellor &amp; Ceremonial Officer, City University (1)</p> <p>The Librarian, City University (1)</p> <p>The British Red Cross (1)</p> <p>The Honorary Secretary, City Arts Trust Ltd (1)</p> <p>The Secretary, The Lord Mayor's 800th Anniversary Trust (1)</p> <p>City of London Magistrates Court (1)</p> <p>Senior Alderman's PA (1)</p> <p>Others named (2)</p> <p>City Gardens Office (1)</p>



	Secretary of the Livery Companies Past Masters Association (1)
	The Bridgemasters (2)
<b>Spares (28)</b>	<b>Spares (63)</b>
<b>TOTAL (180)</b>	<b>TOTAL (500)</b>