

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Members' Privileges Sub Committee	19 March 2015
Subject: Rota for Appointment to Ward Reception Committees	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>The composition of Ward Reception Committees was recently raised by Members at a meeting of the Court of Common Council, with a view to examining the current arrangements and ensuring the appointment to such Committees are made in an equitable manner.</p> <p>Following examination of the existing procedures, it has become apparent that the current allocation of places on Ward Reception Committees inadequately reflects changes in the number of Members representing each Ward since the process was originally approved. Amendments to the allocations made from each Ward have therefore been identified which would ensure parity and fair distribution of appointment. These proposals constitute an updating of existing processes in line with the spirit of the original Court of Common Council agreement, rather than a significant break with tradition or existing practices.</p> <p>This report is concerned only with the appointment of Common Councilmen and does not explore or seek to amend the process by which Aldermanic and ex-officio appointments are made.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>That Members note the updating of the existing rota system in line with the arrangements set out at paragraph 15 of the report.</p>	

Main Report

Background and Current Position

1. At its 22 June 2000 meeting, the Court of Common Council approved a report of the City Lands and Bridge House Estates Committee proposing a revised approach to the appointment of Ward Reception Committees. This new method was intended to provide for a more equitable allocation of places on such Committees, ensuring that membership was spread amongst each Member of the Court as fairly as possible, whilst also retaining representation from each Ward on every occasion.
2. The system is managed on a rota basis, whereby a certain proportion of places on the Committee are allocated to each Ward such that every Common Councilman will serve on at least every third Reception Committee. This system was established so that, with the usual proximity of State Banquets being two per annum, each Member would be appointed to a Ward Reception Committee at least once every 18 months, thereby ensuring allocation was as fair as possible whilst retaining representation from each Ward.
3. With the number of places allocated to each Ward set out by the rota, the Town Clerk identifies the relevant Common Councilmen within each Ward who have gone for the longest period without being appointed to a Ward Reception Committee, thereby

ensuring that Members within each Ward “take turns” and spread the opportunities equally. New Members joining a Ward are placed to the bottom of the list so as not to “jump the queue” and delay others from taking their turns.

4. A number of Members are also on Ward Reception Committees in an ex-officio capacity, i.e. the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, the two Sheriffs, the Chief Commoner, and the Senior Alderman above the Chair (the latter two being the Mover and Seconder of the motion to grant hospitality at the relevant Court of Common Council meeting).
5. Where those ex-officio Members would have been appointed to the Committee according to the rota, the next in line is appointed in their stead. This means that the number of Members comprising a Ward Reception Committee is kept consistent and as high as possible.
6. If a Member indicates they do not wish to serve on a particular Committee, a “swap” is arranged with the Member in the Ward who is next in line to serve.
7. The appointment of Aldermen is managed separately and is also made in accordance with a rota. This sees a total of 6 Aldermen (2 above the Chair and 4 below the Chair) appointed on each occasion, again determined by the length of time since the Alderman last served on a Ward Reception Committee. No amendments are required to this element of the process, with the number of Aldermen for each Ward having remained the same.
8. The full process by which Ward Reception Committees are appointed is set out at Appendix A.

Issues

9. With the arrangements having remained more or less static since their original approval in June 2000, they now no longer adequately reflect the changes to Ward boundaries and associated number of Members in each Ward through the allocations of places on the Committees. As such, Members from some of the Wards recently increased in size are not serving on Ward Reception Committees as often as the original intent would have had them, while others are serving with more frequency.
10. The range in size of the various Wards means that, in practice, Members of some of the smaller Wards are appointed more regularly than those from some of the larger Wards. Not only is the present system inequitable from this perspective, but also in the case of the smaller Wards it places additional burdens on those Members. Under the present system, the disparity in sizes of Wards/Sides of Wards means that, for example, a Member for the Ward of Cheap (which has 3 Members) will be appointed once every third Committee; a Member for the Ward of Castle Baynard, however (which has 8 Members) will be appointed only every fourth Committee.
11. There are also come discrepancies between Sides of Wards. For instance, Cripplegate Within and Cripplegate Without are both represented by 4 Common Councilmen, but whereas as Cripplegate Within is awarded 5 places every three Committees, Cripplegate Without is awarded only 4. A similar situation can be found in Farringdon Without, where the North and South Sides receive slightly different allocations.

Updating the Rota

12. It is therefore apparent that it is necessary to update the allocations for each Ward based on their current representation, altering the rota accordingly. It is not proposed

to remove the Ward element of the Committees, as it is desirable at such events to ensure all Wards/Sides of Wards of the City are represented.

13. It is not therefore proposed to make any fundamental changes to the process, with instead this representing solely an overdue update of the current allocations in line with the process previously agreed by the Court, which should have been implemented automatically at an earlier stage.
14. The allocations made to each Ward will therefore be revisited in such a way as to take account of the alterations made to Ward Boundaries and the consequent number of Members for each Ward since 2000. This would have the benefit of retaining the strengths of the existing system which, on the whole, has worked well since its implementation, while also increasing the equitability of the allocation of places.
15. The revised rota would therefore see appointments made in accordance with the following allocations:
 - Wards with 2 or 3 Members would receive 3 places every 3 Committees.
 - Wards with 4 Members would receive 4 places every 3 Committees.
 - Wards with 5 Members would receive 5 places every 3 Committees.
 - Wards with 6 Members would receive 6 places every 3 Committees.
 - Wards with 8 Members would receive 8 places every 3 Committees.
16. This means that each Ward Reception Committee would be comprised of 36 or 37 Common Councilmen, 6 Aldermen, the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs for the time-being, and the Chief Commoner.

Implications

17. The updating of the rota will mean an increase to the allocations made to the following Wards:
 - Castle Baynard
 - Farringdon Without North Side
 - Lime Street
18. As a result, the following Wards would also lose one allocation per cycle, so as to allow for this and ensure parity with other Wards.
 - Bishopsgate Within
 - Bishopsgate Without
 - Coleman Street
 - Cripplegate Within
 - Tower
19. It should be noted that these amendments would not unfairly disadvantage any one Ward/Side of Ward as opposed to another, but would restore parity and equitable distribution of places in line with the original intention of the Court's approved rota system.
20. The notable exception remains those Wards with only 2 Common Councilmen (i.e. Bassishaw, Billingsgate, Bread Street, Bridge and Bridge Without, Candlewick, and Queenhithe). These Wards will continue to have slightly greater representation on

Ward Reception Committees given their small size (i.e. 1.5 places every 3 Committees). However, without removing the necessity for all Wards to be represented or fundamentally altering either the size of Wards or the size of Ward Reception Committees, it is not possible to remove this in-built bias.

Conclusion

21. The existing rota system is clearly outdated and in need of updating so as to make it salient for the changing sizes of Wards since its original approval. This refresh will maintain the spirit of the existing system while increasing the equitability of distribution. Members are therefore asked to note this update to the Rota to reflect the current position.

Appendices

Appendix A: Process for the appointment of a Ward Reception Committee

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