

Committee(s)	Dated:
Members Privileges Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee	21/09/2017
Subject: Members' Briefing and past Members	Public
Report of: Bob Roberts – Director of Communications	For Decision
Report author: Yassar Abbas – Communications Office, Town Clerk's Department	

Summary

Following a recommendation made by the Members Privileges Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee, the Policy & Resources Committee requested the Director of Communications investigate making the Members' Briefing available to past Members of the Court of Common Council and report back to the Sub-Committee on the proposal.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked:

- Not to make the Members' Briefing available to past Members on the grounds it would erode current Members' privileges, risk sensitive information being shared outside the City of London Corporation and lead to Members' Briefing being seen as public documents which ought therefore to be displayed on the website.
- If Members wish to make Members' Briefing available to past Members they agree to the approach set out in this report for making the Briefing available.

Main Report

Background

1. At the Members Privileges Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee meeting on 22 June 2017, the past Chief Commoner was heard on the issue of the Members' Briefings following the election of the new Court of Common Council in March. He noted that many past Members were interested in keeping up to date with news from the City of London Corporation and asked whether the Members' Briefing could be circulated to them.
2. The Sub Committee felt that there was no reason for the Members' Briefing to be non-public, and upon its recommendation the Policy and Resources Committee

requested the Director of Communications to investigate and report back to the Sub Committee on the proposal.

Current Position

3. The Members' Briefing is used to communicate with all Members of the Court of Common Council on news from across the organisation including the work of the Lord Mayor, Chairman of Policy and Resources and Chief Commoner, and could include information which is not publicly available.
4. The Members' Briefing is distributed by email once a month and can also be downloaded from the City of London intranet.
5. Feedback received from Members, following a review of the Members' Briefing a number of years ago, requested its distribution be restricted to Members only.

Proposals

6. Taking into account the feedback received from Members previously and given that the Members Briefing is designed specifically as a tool for communicating with Members, your officers advise it is not made available to past Members for three reasons:-
 - i. Sensitive material can be included in the Briefing which should not be shared outside the organisation.
 - ii. Receipt of the Members' Briefing can be seen as a privilege afforded to Members only so its availability should cease with Membership.
 - iii. If the Members' Briefing is to be considered a public document and made available to past Members, a case could be put forward for it to be made available more widely to the Livery and indeed the general public including future potential election candidates.
7. Should Members decide to make the Briefing available to past Members, it is proposed that this be done by email as this will involve no additional costs and is the same method by which it is distributed to current Members. The Communications Office will then, with support from the Committee and Member Services Team, compile a list of past Members for whom a contact email address is currently held on record. The Office will contact these past Members asking them to confirm whether or not they would like to receive the Briefing and add their details to its email distribution list accordingly. Any past Members whose details are not available can be added to the distribution list by requesting this through a Member or fellow past Member.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. This proposal aligns with Key Policy Priority 2 of the Corporate Plan by improving the value for money of our services within the constraints of reduced services.

Implications

9. This proposal requires no additional funding. The key risk associated with this proposal is the potential publication of sensitive information. This can be mitigated by making officers aware that the Members' Briefing is now available to past Members and therefore is to be considered a public document.

Conclusion

Officers are of the view that the Members' Briefing should not be made available to past Members on the grounds it would erode current Members' privileges, risk sensitive information being shared outside the City of London Corporation and lead to the Members' Briefing being seen as public document which ought to be displayed on the website.

If Members wish to make Members' Briefing available to past Members then the approach set out in this report for making the Briefing available should be agreed.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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