

MEMBERS PRIVILEGES SUB (POLICY AND RESOURCES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 21 September 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Members Privileges Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Wendy Mead (Chief Commoner) (Chairman)
Ann Holmes
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Deputy Edward Lord
Deputy Catherine McGuinness (Ex-Officio Member)
John Scott (Ex-Officio Member)
Jeremy Simons
Michael Welbank

Officers:

Bob Roberts	-	Director of Communications
Simon Murrells	-	Assistant Town Clerk
Fiona Hoban	-	Assistant Remembrancer
Dorian Price	-	Guildhall Manager
Gregory Moore	-	Town Clerk's Office
Will Millard	-	Town Clerk's Office
Angela Roach	-	Principal Committee and Member Services Manager

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2017 be approved subject to the word “un-elected” at the end of the first sentence in paragraph two of item 8 (relating to the Members’ Briefing) being amended to read “not re-elected”.

Matters Arising - Role and Status of the Chief Commoner

A Member reminded the Sub-Committee that the approval of the wording of the description of the role and status of the Chief Commoner was still outstanding. It was suggested that once finalised the description should be circulated to all the Clerks of Livery Companies. Members supported the suggestion.

4. RECOGNITION OF DEPARTING MEMBERS AT COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk setting out a number of options by which departing Members of the Court of Common Council could be recognised for their service.

Members were of the view that the introduction of written resolutions (i.e. the option set out at paragraph 15 of the report) would be the best option for thanking departing Members for their service on the Court. It was noted that this would involve a resolution being circulated as part of the Court Summons and a Motion to agree it as set out. This course of action would provide more formal recognition from the Court, whilst minimising the amount of time taken at the meeting. The terms of the resolutions would be agreed by the Ward Deputy as was current practice (or, in certain circumstances, the Alderman of the Ward).

Members acknowledged that it would not be necessary for the resolution to be read out but that an additional brief oral statement could be added in the case of Members who die whilst in office.

Reference was made to the quality and manner in which resolutions were currently presented to Members once agreed and it was felt that this should be enhanced and that the Town Clerk should look at how this could be achieved.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee that:-

1. departing Members of the Court of Common Council be recognised for their service by way of a written resolution on the Court Summons as referred to above; and
2. the current quality and manner in which resolutions were presented be recipients be enhanced and the Town Clerk be asked to look at how this could be achieved.

5. MEMBERS BRIEFING AND PAST MEMBERS

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Communications concerning the merits of making the Members Briefing available to past Members of the Court of Common Council.

The Sub-Committee noted the recommendation was 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 a public document which should therefore be displayed on the website.

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee expressed support for the Director's recommendation commenting that in her view the Members' Briefing was a means of keeping serving Members informed of the City Corporation's activities. However, the majority of Members were of the view that past Members should be kept informed. Members felt that the majority of information in the briefing was public and that, should it be necessary to include anything sensitive, it could be suitably summarised.

Further discussion ensued on alternative options and on how non-public information should be dealt with.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee that:

1. the Members Briefing be made available to past Members; and
2. the Briefing should not be made available on the website.

6. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER URGENCY DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk reporting action taken since its last meeting.

A Member referred to the decision to reconfigure the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen's IT Room into two separate rooms. He stated that he had understood that the rooms would form part of package of a dedicated support for the Chairmen of the Police, Finance, Planning and Transportation and Establishment Committee. He suggested that the rooms be made available principally for use by those Chairmen and their Deputies with other Chairmen being able to use the room only when it was available. Several Members supported his suggestion.

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee expressed concern about the high volume of work being undertaken by chairmen in general. She advised that she was happy for the Policy Chairman's meeting room to be used when available. With regard to the future use of newly converted rooms, she suggested that should the above mentioned proposal be supported all Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen should be consulted. She also referred to, and expressed support for, the introduction of a video conferencing facility being made available particularly in the current climate.

The Assistant Town Clerk reminded Members that meeting rooms were also available for Members to use in the North Wing. He advised that booking rooms

for Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen would become easier once the new Chairmen's PAs were been recruited. He advised that in his view the Pas should be responsible for booking the new meeting room.

Detailed discussion ensued during which it was agreed by the majority of Members that the IT room should be designated for use exclusively by the four Chairmen and their Deputies and that in terms of the adjoining meeting room, the four Chairmen and the Deputies should have first call but, when not in use, the room should be available for use by all other Chairmen or Deputy Chairmen. Consultation should take place with all Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen on this basis and that a further meeting of the Sub-Committee should be convened on the morning of the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee to consider the outcome in order to make a recommendation to the Grand Committee.

RESOLVED – That all Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen be consulted on the proposal as set out above and that a further meeting of the Sub-Committee be convened on the 19 October 2017 to consider the outcome of the consultation and to make a recommendation to the Policy and Resource Committee thereon.

7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Vote of Thanks

A Member referred to the vote of thanks for Chairmen reaching the end of their term and suggested that the inscribed resolution be presented to Chairmen at the Committee Dinner held in honour of the outgoing Chairman, suitably framed. Members support his suggestion.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee that the inscribed resolution to Committee Chairmen be presented to Chairmen at the Committee Dinner held in honour of the outgoing Chairman and that the resolution be suitably framed.

New Members and Livery Companies

A Member advised that some of the newer Members on the Court were seeking advice on whether they should join a livery company and, if so, how they should go about it. He questioned whether anything could be done to assist with introductions. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that there were a number of livery companies with no City Corporation Members serving on them and agreed that further consideration should be given to the matter. It was suggested that the issue should be referred to the Livery Committee to look into.

RESOLVED – That the Livery Committee be requested to look at whether any assistance could be given in terms of introducing new Members of the Court of Common Council to livery companies.

City Corporation Pocket Book

Reference was made to the poor quality of the covering sleeve for the Members' Pocket Book. It was suggested that to ensure that it was more durable it should be made of leather and not plastic. Whilst it was acknowledged that it was too late for this year, it was suggested that the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee should be requested to reconsider the quality of the material used to produce the sleeve.

RESOLVED - the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee be requested to reconsider the quality of the material used to produce the sleeve for the pocket book.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

9. 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 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item Nos.

Paragraph(s) in Schedule 12A

10 - 11

1 and 3

Part 2 – Non-Public Agenda

10. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2017 be approved.

11. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER URGENCY DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk reporting action taken since its last meeting and noted the action taken in relation to the Member exit to Guildhall Yard.

12. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were no non-public questions.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was no non-public urgent business.

The meeting ended at 11.00am

Chairman
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