

MINUTES

Meeting: GLA Oversight Committee
Date: Thursday 21 March 2013
Time: 10.00 am
Place: Committee Room 5, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA

Copies of the minutes may be found at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/the-london-assembly/committees/oversight>

Present:

Len Duvall (Chair)
Jennette Arnold OBE (Deputy Chair)
Darren Johnson
Joanne McCartney
Steve O'Connell
Caroline Pidgeon MBE
Valerie Shawcross CBE

1. Apologies for Absence and Chair's Announcements (Item 1)

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Boff AM and Tony Arbour AM.

2. Declarations of Interests (Item 2)

2.1 **Resolved:**

- (a) That the list of Assembly Members' appointments, as set out in the table at Item 2, be noted as disclosable pecuniary interests; and**
- (b) That gifts and hospitality received by Members, as set out in the Authority's gifts and hospitality register, be noted.**

3. Minutes (Item 3)

3.1 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee held on 26 February 2013 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4. Summary List of Actions (Item 4)

- 4.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.
- 4.2 In relation to the Committee's views on proposals for a GLA code of practice in the use of statistics, as expressed at its meeting of 26 February 2013, Valerie Shawcross AM felt that recent correspondence between the Chair of the Assembly's Police and Crime Committee and the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) supported Members' concerns about the proposed GLA code.
- 4.3 Joanne McCartney AM suggested that the Committee should have a further opportunity to review the proposed GLA code prior to its implementation. The Deputy Chair felt that, in light of the comments made by the Chair of the UKSA, the GLA Oversight Committee should consider a further paper on the proposed code as an item for more in-depth scrutiny rather than a consultative item of business. As such, the Chair suggested that the Head of Paid Service's response to the Assembly's concerns on the proposed code should be addressed at the next meeting as a separate agenda item rather than discussed as part of the standing Summary List of Actions report.
- 4.4 The Head of Paid Service confirmed that any delay in responding to the Chair's recent request for clarification on aspects of the proposed code had only been due to the intention to respond in a single letter to the various different points raised by the Committee. He confirmed that additional work was being undertaken on the proposed code and that it was planned that the Committee would receive a further report at its April meeting. He added that he felt the Chair of the UKSA's comments were not substantially different to the comments made in the consultation paper received by the GLA Oversight Committee at its meeting of 26 February 2013, with the exception of the request for a separate explanatory document illustrating the differences, which he was content to provide.
- 4.5 The Committee also suggested that future Summary List of Action reports should provide indicative deadlines for the receipt of responses to the Chair's requests for further information.

4.6 **Resolved:**

- a) **That an additional paper on the proposed GLA code of practice in the use of statistics be considered at the GLA Oversight Committee meeting of 24 April; and**
- b) **That consideration be given to the provision of indicative deadlines for the receipt of information requested by the Committee in future Summary List of Actions reports.**

5. Action Taken Under Delegated Authority (Item 5)

5.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat setting out recent correspondence issued by the Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee under delegated authority in relation to the Mayor's appointment of Ray Lewis as Senior Adviser, Mentoring. The Committee felt that the Mayor's response to questions asked at the London Assembly Mayor's Question Time meeting on 20 March 2013 in relation to Mr Lewis and the revised Mayoral Scheme of Delegation implicitly acknowledged the concerns of both the Assembly and those made by the Bishop of Barking in his letter to the Mayor of June 2010.

5.2 **Resolved:**

That the recent action taken by the Chair of the Committee under delegated authority be noted.

6. Head of Paid Service Oral Update (Item 6)

6.1 The Head of Paid Service informed the Committee that plans, discussed at the Committee's meeting on 29 January, for the sharing of human resources, information technology and media services between the GLA and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime were still in progress and that a progress report would be submitted for the Committee's consideration at its meeting in May 2013.

6.2 The Head of Paid Service also advised that following discussions with Unison, and in the knowledge that the union had decided not to make a pay claim for the current year, a staff pay increase would not be awarded. In response to a query, the Head of Paid Service made it clear that he had not consulted the Mayor on the decision. The Committee suggested that in future years it should receive a formal consultation paper on the matter in advance of any decision being made.

6.3 The Committee requested an update on the progress and the public availability of the Mayor's 2020 Vision document. Members were informed by the Head of Paid Service that, whilst he had pursued the matter with the Mayor's Office, the launch date remained to be

settled. The Head of Paid Service did, however, emphasise that the Mayor was aware of the anticipated timescales for consultation and final publication, particularly in relation to the previously-stated intention to launch the document either with or close to the publication of the forthcoming report of the London Finance Commission.

- 6.4 The Deputy Chair felt that the credibility of the Mayor's 2020 Vision was being undermined by the uncertainty around the launch and suggested that the Mayor's Office be asked formally for a summary position statement. Valerie Shawcross AM added that the Assembly needed a revised timetable in order to ensure its committees were adequately prepared to scrutinise the 2020 Vision in an efficient and timely way. The Chair suggested that he and the Head of Paid Service should both make urgent representations to the Mayor's Office on this matter.
- 6.5 The Deputy Chair reiterated her appreciation for the GLA's Public Liaison Unit (PLU) officer support to education visits, and cited the 20 March Mayor's Question Time meeting as an example of how effective the unit had been at engaging students across a range of academic institutions. The Head of Paid Service confirmed that he had written to the Deputy Chair confirming that there was no intention to withdraw the PLU officer support for student visitors but that the proposals, as put forward in Item 7 of the agenda, sought to reconfigure the service to take account of the likely post-Olympics fall in demand.
- 6.6 **Resolved:**
- a) **That the GLA Oversight Committee be formally consulted on behalf of the Assembly on the 2013-14 pay award; and**
 - b) **That the Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee and the Head of Paid Service seek clarification from the Mayor's Office on the timetable for the Mayor's 2020 Vision document.**

7. Proposed Changes to the GLA Establishment (Item 7)

- 7.1 The Committee received the report of the Head of Paid Service that set out proposed changes to the Intelligence Unit and the External Affairs Directorate with a net reduction of 6 posts overall and a total expected saving of £450,000 per annum.
- 7.2 The Chair of the Committee queried the stated intent, in both the report and the consultation document issued to staff, to create stronger lines of communication with the Mayor's Chief Economic Adviser as being one of the main aims of the GLA Economics restructure. It was, he felt, an error to build a team specifically to support transient political appointments.
- 7.3 The Head of Paid Service explained that whilst GLA Economics was expected to work closely with and take its direction from the Mayor's Chief Economic Adviser, the proposed restructure was intended to reflect the business and staffing needs of the GLA and address an overdue need to review the management structure within the team.
- 7.4 Caroline Pidgeon AM sought reassurance that the restructure would not affect the work of

GLA Economics, particularly in areas such as London's Living Wage where it had undertaken highly-valued work. The Head of Paid Service referred the Committee to paragraph 4.3.3 of the report where the inclusion of the London Living Wage in the Intelligence Unit's 2013-14 work programme testified to the level of importance with which it was perceived. He added that numerically there would be no change to the number of posts but that savings would be made by reducing the higher grades within the structure.

- 7.5 Darren Johnson AM echoed the views of the Deputy Chair, made earlier in the meeting, in relation to the PLU's support of student visitors and also expressed concern about the Unit's capacity to deal with potential increases in email correspondence following the restructure. The Head of Paid Service responded that, having spoken to the Head of Public and Community Engagement Unit on this point, he was confident that there would not be any significant capacity issues, especially given that the Unit was relatively well resourced with 14 officers; that policy teams were responsible for responding to a significant proportion of correspondence, albeit that the PLU had a full role in processing correspondence; and there was an expectation that correspondence levels would reduce from the numbers received during the Olympics year.
- 7.6 Valerie Shawcross AM asked whether it was prudent to make changes to the ESF Delivery Team at a time when sources of funding and decisions around the GLA's role in that process were still to be determined. The Head of Paid Service responded that the primary impact of that uncertainty would affect the ERDF Team rather than the ESF Delivery Team; nevertheless he agreed to reflect on the comments further.

7.7 **Resolved:**

That, subject to the comments made at the meeting and recorded above, the proposed changes to the establishment in the GLA be noted.

8. State of London Debate (Item 8)

- 8.1 The Committee received the report of the Director of Marketing.
- 8.2 The Chair stated that he felt that the proposals for the 2013 State of London Debate (SOLD) demonstrated a paucity of imagination and innovation and therefore reflected badly on the Authority as a whole. The Chair pointed to the low attendance of the previous (and similarly organised) SOLD event as evidence of a need to do more to change the approach. The Chair suggested that further work should be undertaken to engage younger people, that events should be held in the weeks preceding the debate and that consideration should be given to a greater involvement for the London Assembly.
- 8.3 Caroline Pidgeon AM echoed the view that the Assembly should have a stronger role in the event, that the choice of venue was uninspired and that the 2013 SOLD event should aspire to the success of the 2009 SOLD event held at The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster. The Member added that this year's event could be the vehicle for proper debate and discussion on the Mayor's 2020 Vision and should make full use of exhibition space to fully engage the public.

8.4 Joanne McCartney AM suggested that the proposals did not allow for sufficient time for public debate. She added that this event represented an opportunity to engage the public and consideration be given to offering specific workshops and discussions with Mayoral Advisers, functional body commissioners and Assembly Members.

8.5 **Resolved:**

That the proposals for the 2013 State of London Debate and subsequent discussion be noted.

9. Allocation of Assembly Budget 2013-14 (Item 9)

9.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

9.2 **Resolved:**

That the overall proposed allocation of the Assembly budget for 2013-14 as set out in the report be agreed.

10. Proposed Minor Changes to the GLA's Standing Orders (Item 10)

10.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

10.2 **Resolved:**

(a) That the proposed revisions to the GLA's Standing Orders attached as Appendix 1 of the report be agreed; and

(b) That delegated authority be granted to the Chair of the Assembly to: (i) consult the Mayor of London about the proposed changes to the GLA's Standing Orders in advance of the London Assembly's Annual Meeting on 1 May 2013; and (ii) following consultation with the Mayor, to approve the final proposed revisions to the GLA's Standing Orders for consideration at the Annual Meeting of the Assembly.

11. Work Programme for the GLA Oversight Committee 2012/13 (Item 11)

11.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat. Valerie Shawcross AM noted a spelling mistake made in the report in relation to future agenda items.

11.2 **Resolved:**

That the work programme for 2012/13 be noted.

12. Date of Next Meeting (Item 12)

12.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 24 April 2013 at 10am in Committee Room 5.

13. Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent (Item 13)

13.1 There were no urgent items of business.

14. Close of Meeting

14.1 The meeting finished at 11.10am.

Chair

Date

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