

MINUTES

Meeting: GLA Oversight Committee
Date: Tuesday 3 September 2019
Time: 3.30 pm
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/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/oversight>

Present:

Len Duvall AM (Chair)
Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman)
Sian Berry AM
Tom Copley AM
Steve O'Connell AM
Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Keith Prince AM
Dr Onkar Sahota AM
Navin Shah AM
Peter Whittle AM

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

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Jennette Arnold OBE AM.

2 Declarations of Interests (Item 2)

2.1 **Resolved:**

That the list of offices held by Assembly Members, as set out in the table at Agenda Item 2, be noted as disclosable pecuniary interests.

3 Minutes (Item 3)

3.1 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings of the GLA Oversight Committee held on 1 and 16 July 2019 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 Resolved:

That the completed and outstanding actions arising from previous meetings of the GLA Oversight Committee be noted.

5 New Ways of Working – Smart Working Policy (Item 5)

5.1 The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer, which was introduced by the Chief Officer and Assistant Director, Human Resources & Organisational Development.

5.2 Members raised enquiries as to whether:

- Manager discretion remained towards employees working from home and whether doing so was voluntary;
- The provision of kit to enable remote working came from within existing budgets;
- Certain teams, such as political group staff, would be exempt from specific aspects of flexible working, e.g. hotdesking;
- The Staff Disability Network was being consulted on flexible working arrangements; and
- The policy met the employer's obligation to provide appropriate working conditions for employees.

All of which were confirmed in the positive by the Chief Officer and Assistant Director, noting that the voluntary nature of remote working would be kept under review and that all staff networks had been consulted.

5.3 The Chief Officer also stated that discussions with the Executive Director of Secretariat were ongoing as to any required exemptions from aspects of flexible working applicable to secretariat staff, beyond those confirmed for political group staff. Further discussion then ensued as to how desk availability would operate, and be signposted, in practice. Such parameters were confirmed to still be under consideration.

- 5.4 An observation was raised that it appeared many employees took up remote working opportunities on a Friday and Members therefore asked whether managers could spread this more evenly across the working week to consistently alleviate space pressures within the building. The Assistant Director confirmed that working patterns would be looked at in that context, adding that monitoring had shown the pressure to be particularly high on Wednesdays. In response to concerns over employee output when working from home, the Chief Officer underlined that all employees must be available and accessible when working remotely, as if in the office.
- 5.5 Finally, it was emphasised that one aim associated with the policy was to maximise the use of existing offices prior to considering any change of premises.
- 5.6 The Chief Officer and Assistant Director confirmed that Members would be informed of any suggested amendments to the policy following the close of the extended consultation.

5.7 **Resolved:**

That the report be noted, subject to the queries and comments outlined above.

6 Consultation on New Resolution Policy (Item 6)

- 6.1 The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer which was introduced by the Chief Officer and Assistant Director, Human Resources & Organisational Development. In response to a query raised, it was confirmed that Appendix 1 did not apply to elected Members and this was a typographical error.
- 6.2 Members' discussion focussed on:
- Section 9 of Appendix 1 (Request for Resolution) and whether the employee who submits a request for resolution 'may' or 'should' copy in their line manager. The Assistant Director stated that advice from consultants had been not to make this mandatory but agreed to look at the impact of making it so; and
 - Whether it could be made clearer that information would be shared among relevant parties in the course of resolution.

6.3 **Resolved:**

That the report be noted, subject to the queries and comments recorded above.

7 Chief Officer Review of the Registration of Interests and of Gifts and Hospitality (Item 7)

- 7.1 The Committee received the report of the Chief Office, which was introduced by the Chief Officer and Assistant Director of Finance & Governance.

7.2 Members indicated that they were content with the outlined proposals. In response to a query raised, the Chief Officer confirmed that an update would next be presented to the Committee in November 2019.

7.3 **Resolved:**

That the progress of the Chief Officer's review of the registration of interests and gifts and hospitality be noted, as set out in the report.

8 Group Treasury Management Arrangements (Item 8)

8.1 The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer and Executive Director of Resources, which was introduced by the Assistant Director of Group Finance.

8.2 In response to a Member question on the background of treasury management, it was confirmed that borrowing would continue according to existing principles and the changes proposed would not necessarily result in additional borrowing.

8.3 **Resolved:**

(a) That the background to the work of the Group Treasury team be noted; and

(b) That the proposal to amend the Group Treasury management arrangements be noted.

9 People's Question Time - Enfield (Item 9)

9.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Communities and Intelligence, which was introduced by the Chief Officer and the Executive Director, Communities and Intelligence.

9.2 Members raised concerns over the proposed venue for People's Question Time as follows:

- The lack of cycle facilities;
- The lack of public transport connectivity;
- The difficulties of disabled access to the venue location; and
- The remoteness of the venue.

9.3 Members enquired as to whether other venues had been considered. Assembly Member Bacon made officers aware of a theatre venue in Enfield that he would share further information on. The Executive Director, Communities and Intelligence, confirmed a wide variety of venues had been considered in the Enfield area but that there were considerable challenges involved, including capacity and availability.

- 9.4 The Executive Director, Communities and Intelligence, agreed to:
- Provide further information on cycle facilities at the proposed venue on the ticketing website; and
 - Consider alternative venues, including a local school and theatre, as a matter of urgency.

9.5 **Resolved:**

That the proposals for People’s Question Time, at the Meridian Grand, on Thursday 21 November 2019 be noted, subject to the views recorded above.

10 Work Programme for the GLA Oversight Committee (Item 10)

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

10.2 **Resolved:**

That the work programme for the remainder of 2019-20 be noted, subject to the addition of an item (‘Chief Officer Review of the Registration of Interests and of Gifts and Hospitality’) to the November 2019 meeting.

11 Date of Next Meeting (Item 11)

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 16 October 2019 at 10:00am in Committee Room 5, City Hall.

12 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent (Item 12)

- 12.1 The Chair noted that two items of business had been circulated under cover of supplementary agendas.
- 12.2 Item 12(a) had been received after the main agenda had been printed, but was circulated and published in accordance with the statutory deadline for publication. It was therefore not an urgent item.
- 12.3 Item 12(b) had been accepted as urgent business, under section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, and Standing Order 1.10A(1), so that Assembly outputs could be progressed in advance of any formal pre-election period.

Changes to the GLA Establishment – the Building Safety Team (Item 12a)

12.4 The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer. No further comments were made by the Committee.

12.5 **Resolved:**

That the proposal to create seven posts in a Building Safety Team be noted.

Proposed Delegations of Authority to the Chair of the Committee (Item 12b)

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

12.7 **Resolved:**

(a) That authority be delegated to Len Duvall AM, as Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee, to agree any outputs of the Secretariat Research Unit which are produced for the purposes of publication, for the period up until the May 2020 GLA elections; and

(b) That authority be delegated to Len Duvall AM, as Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee, to agree any output from the investigation into the Garden Bridge project.

13 Close of Meeting

13.1 The meeting closed at 4.14pm.

Chair

Date

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