



City of Westminster

# Committee Agenda

Title: **General Purposes**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 24th February, 2016**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Venue: **Rooms 3 & 4 - 17th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP**

Members: **Councillors:**

Tim Mitchell (Chairman)  
Robert Davis, MBE, DL (Vice-Chairman)  
David Boothroyd  
Melvyn Caplan



**Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda**

**Admission to the public gallery is by ticket, issued from the ground floor reception at City Hall. If you have a disability and require any special assistance please contact the Committee Officer (details listed below) in advance of the meeting.**



**An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Mick Steward, Head of Committee and Governance Services.**

**Tel: 020 7641 3134; Email: [msteward@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk)  
Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Director of Law in advance of the meeting please.

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)**

#### **1. MEMBERSHIP**

- 1.1 The Head of Committee and Governance Services to report any changes in Membership.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in matters on this agenda.

#### **3. MINUTES**

- 3.1 To sign the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2015.

**(Pages 1 - 2)**

#### **4. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2016/17**

- 4.1 Report of the Head of Committee and Governance Services.

**(Pages 3 - 16)**

#### **5. CONSIDERATION OF PETITIONS**

- 5.1 Report of the Head of Committee and Governance Services.

**(Pages 17 - 20)**

#### **6. AUDIO BROADCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- 6.1 Report of the Head of Committee and Governance Services.

**(Pages 21 - 24)**

**Charlie Parker**  
**Chief Executive**  
**16 February 2016**



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES

### General Purposes

#### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **General Purposes** Committee held at 6pm on **Wednesday 4th November, 2015**, Room 7 - 17th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

**Members Present:** Councillors Tim Mitchell (Chairman), Robert Davis (Vice-Chairman), David Boothroyd and Melvyn Caplan

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 There were no changes to the membership.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 3 MINUTES

- 3.1 The Chairman, with the consent of the Members present, signed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2015 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

#### 4 REVISIONS TO THE COUNCIL'S APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEES FOR TRI-BOROUGH PURPOSES (SEE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMITTEE AND GOVERNANCE SERVICES)

- 4.1 The Committee noted that the report was submitted as a result of discussions between the Leaders of the Tri-borough authorities in an attempt to reduce the total number of Members required to sit on Tri-borough Member level appointments. It was noted that both the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had completed the formal decision making changes necessary to their constitutions.
- 4.2 Members were of the opinion that a better solution to avoid, in cases where it was desired, a joint panel of 12 was for the Chief Whip of the Majority Group at each borough to only appoint two Members, with the lead Minority party in

each case nominating one Member. It was noted that a larger panel may be required for the upcoming Tri-borough Director of Children's Services. Accordingly, the Committee did not support the recommendations set out in the report.

4.3 **Resolved:** That the recommendations set out in the report be not adopted.

**5 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2016-17 (SEE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMITTEE AND GOVERNANCE SERVICES)**

**5.1 Resolved:**

That the Council be recommended to approve the dates of full Council meetings, as follows: 13 July 2016, 9 November 2016, 25 January 2017, 1 March 2017, 3 May 2017, 17 May 2017 (Annual).

That the programme of other formal meetings set out in Appendix A be approved.

**6 CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (SEE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMITTEE AND GOVERNANCE SERVICES)**

**Resolved:**

That the Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Terms of Reference of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees set out in Appendix A.

That the Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Policy and Scrutiny Committees names as set out below:

Westminster Scrutiny Commission (unchanged).  
Children, Sports and Leisure  
Environment and Customer Services  
Housing, Finance and Corporate Services (unchanged)  
Adults, Health and Community Protection (unchanged)

**7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

None.

The Meeting ended at 6.16 pm

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_



## General Purposes Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 February 2016</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>For General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Members' Allowance Scheme 2016/17</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Committee and Governance Services</b>
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Policy Context:</b>	<b>Management of the Council</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>There are no additional financial impacts arising from the proposals set out in this report</b>
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Mick Steward</b> <b>Tel: 020 7641 3134</b> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk">msteward@westminster.gov.uk</a></b>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council is required, if it wishes to pay such allowances, to adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme on an annual basis with effect from 1 April each year.
- 1.2 In drawing up the revised Members' Allowances Scheme regard has been given to the recommendations of the London-wide Independent Remuneration Panel convened by London Councils whose most recent report (2014) is listed with the relevant statutory guidance as background documents. These are available upon request.
- 1.3 The Members' Allowances base budget has remained unchanged since 2010. During this period no increase for inflation has been made. There are no changes to the Basic or Special Responsibility Allowances except a minor one which has no impact on the base budget.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Council be recommended to approve the Members' Allowances Scheme attached as Appendix A for 2016/17 with effect from 1 April 2016.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 There is a requirement for local authorities if they wish to adopt a Members' Allowance Scheme on an annual basis, with effect from 1 April each year. Schemes can be amended at any time.
- 3.2 When considering a new scheme, or amending an existing scheme, local authorities must have regard to the report of the London Councils' Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors and relevant guidance from the Secretary of State. The Committee and the Council gave consideration to both of these when agreeing previous schemes and these documents are available as background papers to this report. The Council's overall budget for Members Allowances remains towards the bottom of all London Boroughs.

#### **Members' Allowances**

- 3.3 The current Members' Allowances Scheme was adopted by the Council on 4 March 2015. The Scheme for the 2016/17 municipal year requires the approval of the full Council, upon recommendation from the General Purposes Committee. As in previous years regard has been given to the findings and recommendations detailed in the Panel's most recent report published in 2014.
- 3.4 The Chief Whip of the Majority Party has, as in previous years, been consulted on the proposals, which have also been shared with the Chief Whip of the Minority Party whose comments are set out in paragraph 6.1 below.

#### **Basic Allowance**

- 3.5 It is proposed to retain the level of Basic Allowance payable to all Members at the same level, i.e £9,000 per annum.

#### **Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)**

- 3.6 Significant adjustments were made to the scheme in 2010 which intended, within the constraints of the existing budget provision, to ensure the scheme rewarded more fully the duties and tasks undertaken by Members. The changes to the Scheme proposed in this report continue the trend commenced previously to visit the SRAs to tasks undertaken in particular day time duties.
- 3.7 The Scheme continues to reflect and reward the levels of duties undertaken by Members in formal posts, including those bodies which have a particularly frequent schedule of meetings.

## **ICT Allowance**

- 3.8 As part of the Members Allowances Scheme approved at the time of the City Council elections in 2006, provision for the payment of a one off allowance of £1,000 upon election was made to allow for the purchase of ICT equipment. This was paid in 2010 and again in 2014. This is next due in 2018. The Chief Information Officer confirmed in 2014 that the value of the IT allowance continued to be acceptable given that the cost of IT commodity computing kit has been stable or reducing over recent years.

## **Travel and Subsistence Allowance**

- 3.9 The Council's scheme continues to be more restrictive than the Panel's recommendations and only allows for travel claims for approved duties outside of the Greater London area (travel to other London Boroughs is not reclaimable). No change to this part of the scheme is proposed. Reference is included in the scheme to the availability of all zone permits for Members, for use when undertaking official duties.

## **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 There is a requirement that councils must make any scheme for the following year to commence on 1 April. Schemes can be amended at any time but new schemes can be introduced only from the start of each year commencing on 1 April. The approval of the full Council is necessary to any amendments to existing schemes or the adoption of new schemes.
- 4.2 Regulations relating to Members' Allowances require the publication of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the scheme of allowances and details of the total sums paid to each Member under each category of allowance in each year. The statutory guidance on the publicity requirements suggests that details of allowances paid are made available on the Council's website together with information on the responsibilities of elected Members and the duties and time commitment which the basic allowance is intended to remunerate. This has previously been agreed by this Committee.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The Members' Allowances budget for 2016/17 is £930k which excludes the provision for the employer National Insurance. The provision for National Insurance is £96k. Both budgets remain unchanged from the last financial year and are deemed to be sufficient to meet all the financial commitments.

## **6.1 Consultation**

The Chief Whip of the Minority Party has been consulted. He requests that the Minority Party membership on the Planning Application Committees be treated as a panel of 5 Members rather than a fixed membership of 4 – one for each Committee and that one further Special Responsibility Allowance of £2,000 be payable. This is reflected in Appendix A. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party has been consulted and supports this suggestion. The balance on each of the Planning Applications Committees will remain: 4 Majority Party and one Minority Party Member.

**If you have any questions about this report, or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact Mick Steward:**

**Email: [msteward@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk)**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1972  
BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

- Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 2014
- Guidance Issued by Secretary of State
- Report of the General Purposes Committee – 25 February 2015



## **APPENDIX A**

### **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME FROM 1 APRIL 2016 TO 31 MARCH 2017**

1. This Scheme is made under, and in accordance with, the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
2. The rates of allowances specified will apply until the Scheme is amended or replaced, in which event the revised rates of allowances will be paid from the date from which the amendment takes effect.
3. Subject to the relevant form being completed at the appropriate time, entitlement to allowances under the Scheme commences on the date upon which a Member is elected to the Council or is elected or appointed to an office qualifying for special responsibility. The entitlement ceases on the date upon which a Member ceases to hold a qualifying office or ceases to be a Member of the Council (the fourth day after polling day in the year of City Council elections, i.e. the Monday). An apportionment of the relevant allowances will be made in the same proportion as the number of days that the Member held Office or was a Member, bears to the number of days in the relevant year.
4. Any Member may by notice in writing to the Head of Committee and Governance Services elect to forego for any period any part of an entitlement to an allowance under the Scheme which will take effect from the date upon which the notice is received by the Head of Committee and Governance Services.
5. Allowances will be paid by equal monthly instalments on the 20th day of each month. A £1,000 lump sum Basic Allowance for Members to purchase ICT equipment will be paid to any Member elected at a by-election. No ICT allowance shall be payable unless the confirmation is received that computer hardware and an email address for Council use is available. This allowance will not be paid if a Member received this allowance upon having been elected at a by-election in the previous 12 months.
6. Except where so authorised by the Head of Committee and Governance Services any claim for travel and subsistence allowances must be made within two months of the date of the duty to which the claim relates.

#### **Basic Allowance**

7. A Basic Allowance of £9,000 pa from 1 April 2016 will be paid to every Member of the Council who formally elects to receive it.

### **Special Responsibility Allowance**

8. Payments of Special Responsibility Allowances will be made to Members of the Council who hold special offices unless they formally elect not to receive them. Attached as Annex A is a list of the Special Responsibility Allowances payable from 1 April 2016.

### **Conferences**

9. Councillors are entitled to have their Conference fees met when approved by the appropriate Cabinet Member, Committee or the Head of Members Services in consultation with the relevant party Chief Whip and to receive payments at the approved rates for travel and subsistence in respect of their attendance at conferences held outside the City to discuss matters relevant to the discharge of the Council's functions.

### **Travel Expenses**

10. Members and Co-opted Members are entitled to claim payment of Travel Allowances at the rates of allowance set out in Annex B where expenditure has necessarily been incurred to enable them to attend an approved duty, defined as set out in Annex C, but only when travelling outside the Greater London area. Members of Education Admissions and Exclusions Appeal Panels are entitled to claim travel allowances for attendance at meetings relating to their membership at the rates set out in Annex B.

Members of the Council shall be entitled to a City Council all zones official parking permit for use when undertaking official council duties and otherwise used in accordance with the rules relating to their use.

### **Subsistence**

11. Subsistence may be claimed only for accommodation or meals at conferences (approved in accordance with paragraph (i) of Annex C) where such costs are not included in the conference fee, subject to the maximum allowance referred to in Annex B.

### **Payments whilst under Suspension**

12. Payments of allowances, basic and special responsibility, shall not be paid to a Member who is suspended or if partially suspended that element of special responsibility allowance which may be payable in respect of an office held by the Member to which the partial suspension relates.

### **Publication**

13. This scheme will be published as required by legislation. At the end of each financial year the City Council is required by legislation to publish the sums paid to councillors under the Scheme.

## ANNEX A

### MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME – SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2016

Office Holders	Allowances (from 1.4.16) Proposed	Total Cost (from 1.4.16)
<b>Leader/Deputy Leader</b>	£	£
Leader of the Council (Chairman of the Cabinet)	35,000	35,000
Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice Chairman of the Cabinet)	17,500	17,500
<b>Cabinet Members</b>		
Each Cabinet Member (excluding the Leader and the Deputy Leader) (x8)	10,000	80,000
<b>Opposition Leader/Whips</b>		
Leader of the Opposition	8,000	8,000
Chief Whip (Majority)	5,000	5,000
Chief Whip (Minority)	4,000	4,000
Minority Party Deputy Leader	4,000	4,000
<b>Policy and Scrutiny Committees</b>		
Each Scrutiny Committee Chairman (x4)	8,000	32,000
Minority Party Scrutiny Spokesperson	4,000	4,000
<b>Other Committee/Sub-Committee Chairmen</b>		
Audit and Performance	8,000	8,000
Standards	3,000	3,000
Planning Applications Committees (x4)	4,000	16,000
Licensing Sub-Committees (x4)	4,000	16,000
Pension Fund Committee	3,000	3,000
*Licensing Committee Chairman	8,000	8,000

\* (If this Chairman is also appointed as a Chairman of a Licensing Sub-Committee they will only receive the allowance payable to the Licensing Committee Chairman)

**Deputy Cabinet Members**

Each Deputy Cabinet Member appointed to support a Cabinet Member (x16)	3,000	48,000
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**Other Panels**

Chairman of Rating Advisory Panel	3,000	3,000
Chairman of Discretionary Housing Benefits Panel	3,000	3,000

Panel Members of the Discretionary Housing and Benefits Review Panel and the Rating Panel (x8)	2,000	16,000
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Council Members of CityWest Homes Board (x4)	2,000	8,000
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Members of Pension Fund Committee except Chairman (x3)	2,000	6,000
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**Committee Vice-Chairmen**

Each Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees and the Audit and Performance Committee (x5)	2,000	10,000
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Panel Members of the Licensing Sub-Committees, Members of the Planning Applications Committees rate of £2,000 (x23 - £46,000). This separate SRA is not payable to the Chairmen of these bodies.

Panel Member of the Adoption and Fostering Panel	3,000	3,000
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**NOTE REGARDING SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON APPOINTED UNDER SECTION 28 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS ON OTHER COMMITTEES**

The Independent Person shall be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance of £500 pa.

The co-opted Members of the Children and Community Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee shall be paid upon election and completion of the necessary acceptance of office a sum of £300 to cover their out of pocket expenses for the period of their office.

## ANNEX B

### TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES: (OUTSIDE THE GREATER LONDON AREA)

#### (A) TRAVEL

##### (a) Travel by own private vehicle

<b>Motor Mileage Allowance</b>	<b>Pence Per Mile</b>
Motorcycles:	
Up to 150cc	8.5
151-500cc	12.3
Over 500cc	<u>16.5</u>
 <b>Cars &amp; Tri cars:</b>	
500cc-999cc	35.8
1000-1199cc	39.9
Over 1199cc	<u>49.4</u>

##### (b) Travel by Public Transport

The ordinary fare or any reasonably available cheap fare actually paid.

##### (c) Travel by Taxi

Members are not permitted to claim for travel by taxi except as part of onward or return travel to or from a conference held outside the Greater London area where a claim for other travel expenses has or could be made.

The Head of Committee and Governance Services shall be authorised to reimburse claims for taxi fares, on an exceptional basis, for example on medical advice, to and from approved duties. Such authority to be obtained in advance, if possible.

##### (d) Travel by Rail and Air

(i) The ordinary fare or any available cheap fare actually paid.

(ii) Actual expenditure incurred on:  
Reservation of seats  
Sleeping accommodation for an overnight journey  
Deposit on portorage of baggage

(iii) Travel by Air shall only be allowed when included as part of the formal approval of the attendance at a conference or overseas visit. In the case of overseas visits the cost to be met from the budget of the relevant service.

**(e) Additional Travel Expenses**

The rates specified above may be increased by not more than the amount of any expenditure incurred on tolls, ferries, parking fees or cost of overnight garaging of a motor vehicle, except that reimbursement of the Central London Congestion Charge shall not be permitted.

**(B) SUBSISTENCE**

Subsistence claims for the reasonable costs of overnight accommodation or meals not included in the Conference fee can only be claimed, up to a maximum of £180 per day, upon production of relevant receipts.

**(C) RECEIPTS**

Claims for reimbursement of expenditure by main line rail, air or any other additional expenses, or subsistence, must be accompanied by a receipt.

**Note:** All Members shall be entitled to apply to the Head of Members' Services for the use of an all zones parking permit for their use whilst on Official Council business only such permit only to be used in accordance with the guidance notes for use issued with the permits.

## **ANNEX C**

### **LIST OF APPROVED DUTIES FOR TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE:**

The following are the categories of duties which qualify for payment of travel and subsistence allowance, where such expenditure has been incurred (although separate payments will only be reimbursed for travel outside the Greater London area):

- (a) Meetings of the Council, the Cabinet, their Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and meetings of the Westminster Scrutiny Commission and the Policy and Scrutiny Committees and Task Groups of which the Councillor is a member or at which a Councillor who is not a member of that body attends to address the meeting with the prior permission (where such permission is required under Standing Orders) of the Chairman.
- (b) Attendance as the Council's representative at a meeting of any joint authority or Committee of local authorities or of any Committee or Sub-Committee of the body of which the Council is a constituent member.
- (c) Attendance as the Council's representative at meetings of any association of authorities or Committee or Sub-Committee of the association of which the Councillor is a member.
- (d) Attendance at duties which qualify for attendance allowance as single member duties as specified in the Regulations, currently:

Meetings to determine the attendance of individual pupils at special schools.

Rota and other visits to inspect establishments on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Adults and Public Health.

- (e) Attendance at any other meeting convened by the Council, the Cabinet, a Committee or Sub-Committee to discuss matters relevant to the discharge of the Council's functions and to which Members of more than one Party Group have been invited.
- (f) Attendance at any meeting, which is an induction training session, seminar, presentation, or briefing arranged by Chief Officers of the City Council for all Members of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel to discuss matters relevant to the discharge of the Council's functions and to which Members of more than one Party Group have been invited.
- (g) Attendance as the Council's representative in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions at meetings of outside bodies (excluding local authority maintained schools), their Committees and Sub-Committees. The Head of Committee and Governance Services maintains a list of such representatives and has delegated powers to add and remove bodies to this category to reflect formal appointments made by the City Council.



- (h) Attendance at visits and inspection of sites and premises arranged by officers or approved by Cabinet/Committee (eg opening of new facilities).
- (i) Attendance approved by the appropriate Committee or by the Head Member Services, in accordance with his delegation at conferences convened by other authorities and organisations to discuss matters relevant to the discharge of the Council's functions.
- (j) Attendance by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members, Deputy Cabinet Members, Leader of the Opposition, and Chief Whips on matters concerning the discharge of the Council's functions.
- (k) Attendance by Cabinet Members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees and Sub-Committees concerning the discharge of functions relevant to the work of their portfolio or their Committees or Sub-Committees, including Chairman's Call-over meetings and site visits.
- (l) Attendance before Parliamentary Committees, official bodies and inquiries to give evidence or make representations on the council's behalf.
- (m) Attendance as the Council's appointee or nominee at any meeting. (This excludes party group meetings but includes single member duties where one member has been appointed, appearing as a Council witness at a Planning Inquiry or court proceedings or member-level working groups appointed by a Committee and representation on any outside body which is not eligible for attendance allowance).

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## General Purposes Committee

**Date:** 24 February 2016

**Classification:** For General Release

**Title:** Considerations of Petitions

**Report of:** Head of Committee and Governance Services

**Financial Summary:** There are no financial implications

**Report Author and Contact Details:** Mick Steward  
Tel: 020 7641 3134  
Email: [msteward@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk)

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The operation of the Council's petition scheme has not been fully reviewed since its adoption in 2010. Accordingly, and since the publication of the guidance referred to in this report it is timely to do so.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council be recommended to approve the following changes.
- (a) That the period of time in which e-petitions hosted by the Council can run is shortened to a maximum of 6 weeks.
  - (b) That petitions submitted, with the exception of those referred to in para 3.7 below with 500 signatures or more result in a report to full Cabinet.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has received 126 e-petitions since the facility was launched in 2010. For the most part it is clear that most "signatures" are collected in an initial period that the petition is launched.
- 3.2 Given that generally entries are made in the initial period that the e-petitions is live the proposed change to reduce the period of time in which e-petitions can collect 'signatures' to 6 weeks is not thought to have a particularly adverse impact on the number of signatures likely to be collected. However, on the contrary, the change will allow for a speedier response to the issue in question.

- 3.3 The Government have introduced regulations as they wish to make it easier for local residents and businesses to challenge unfair, disproportionate or unreasonable parking policies. The DCLG believe that introducing a right to challenge parking policies will strengthen local democracy and encourage citizen participation in local decision making.
- 3.4 Councils are obliged to ensure that those affected by traffic regulation orders can raise issues by having in place a Petition Scheme that allows those affected to raise petitions about specific parking restrictions. The DCLG accept that Councils will have differing arrangements but expect decisions on the responses to be made by those who are accountable to the local electorate. It should not be delegated to an officer or a single executive Member.
- 3.5 In order that there is a consistent approach it is proposed that although not a regulatory requirement, the changes outlined in this report are applied to all petitions.
- 3.6 Currently, it is only those petitions which are submitted by, generally a Ward Councillor, to full Council that generate a requirement for a report to a single Cabinet Member. There is no current requirement for reports in responses to petitions to be submitted to a meeting of the **Cabinet**. It is, however, proposed that all petitions, not just those relating to parking, whether submitted to full Council or through the e-Petition process and contain at least 500 signatures generate a requirement for the relevant Chief Officer to report to the Cabinet.
- 3.7 A limitation that no two petitions, which in the view of the Chief Executive, are on the same subject shall be referred to the Cabinet in a six month period. In the event that a petition is not considered by the Cabinet in light of this requirement petitions shall be referred to the relevant Chief Officer for response.
- 3.8 Petitions which are submitted to full Council, but which do not have 500 signatures, shall continue to be reported by the Chief Officer to the relevant Cabinet Member. The requirement to do so within 3 months of the petition being submitted shall also remain.
- 3.9 In order to ensure compliance with, in particular the response requirements set out in the Petition Scheme regular monitoring reports, will be submitted to the Executive Management Team.
- 3.10 The Council's Petition Scheme already provides that petitions relating to a planning application or a licensing application shall be treated as representations and referred for consideration as part of the respective planning and licensing processes.
- 3.11 The Committee is therefore asked to recommend to the Council that the Petition Scheme be amended accordingly. The changes proposed will provide

for a more transparent response to petition and ensure a quicker and potentially more effective response.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications regarding this matter.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 removed the requirements on local authorities to have a Petition Scheme. However, Westminster City Council has previously agreed to provide such a facility as part of the Constitution.
- 5.2 The Government guidance issued in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 that petitions relating to Parking matters be considered at a meeting of the Cabinet. As explained elsewhere in this report, to ensure consistency this is being applied to all petitions.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Given the streamlined and quicker response that these changes will initiate resulting in an improvement to local democracy, the Committee is asked to approve, and that Council then approves the adjustments to the Petition Scheme.
- 6.2 The operation of the changes outlined in this report will be carefully monitored and if changes are considered necessary a further report submitted.

**If you have any questions about this report, or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact Mick Steward:**  
Email: [msteward@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk)

#### **Background Papers**

- None

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City of Westminster

## General Purposes Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 February 2016</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>For General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Audio Broadcasting of Council Meetings</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Committee and Governance Services</b>
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>There are no financial implications</b>
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Mick Steward</b> <b>Tel: 020 7641 3134</b> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk">msteward@westminster.gov.uk</a></b>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council welcomes the public filming or the use generally of transmitting meetings. This report proposes that, in furtherance of making Council meetings more accessible, that the audio recording of Council meetings which are already made be placed on the Council's website.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Council be recommended to approve the following revised Standing Order 46:
1. With the exception of those meetings referred to in Standing Order 46 (3), meetings of the Council, its Committees and their Sub-Committees will generally be recorded for the purposes of assisting with the recording of decisions. The sound recording of full Council meetings shall be placed on the Council's website for as such time as the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications shall consider appropriate. The recording of other meetings to be erased as soon as the minutes of the relevant meeting have been approved.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Over the last few years the Council has, together with many other local authorities allowed the use of modern technologies to provide greater access to its meetings. This is also in keeping with the greater openness sought by the DCLG.

3.2 The public attendance at Council meetings including Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committees is for the most part low which is in keeping with the trend nationally. As a further step towards transparency and making Council meetings accessible it is proposed to place the full audio recording of Council meetings on the Council's website. The number of people accessing this will be monitored by officers and the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications who will consider the length of time that the recording remains on the website given space constraints.

3.3 In order to assist the full Standing Order 46, as currently drafted, is reproduced below:

- (1) With the exception of those Meetings referred to in (3) below, meetings of the Council, its Committees and their Sub-Committees, the Cabinet and its Committees shall be sound recorded for the purposes of assisting with the recording of decisions. Such sound recording, which shall not be available to the press and public, to be erased as soon as the Minutes of the relevant meeting have been approved at a subsequent meeting.
- (2) The Chief Executive may authorise in exceptional cases the retention of the sound recording of any specific meeting if in his opinion, it would be useful in the conduct of the business of the City Council or otherwise be appropriate.
- (3) In circumstances where Standing Order 39(1) applies (ie where a meeting listed in that Standing Order has excluded the press and public) meetings will not normally be sound recorded.
- (4) The Chairman of the Westminster Scrutiny Commission, the Policy and Scrutiny Committees and Task Groups or Sub-Committees relating thereto shall have the discretion to dispense with the requirement to have particular meetings sound recorded where it is not appropriate or practical to do so.

3.4 Upon return to the Council House consideration will be given to webcasting Council meetings and a further report submitted.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the proposals in this report.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report. Local authorities, by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972 may make Standing Orders in relation to its meetings.



- 5.2 Whilst the Council does not intend to place audio recordings of Committee and Sub-Committees on the website these are available upon request. However, once the minutes of the relevant meeting have been approved the recording of these meetings will generally be destroyed.
6. **Other Implications:** None.

**If you have any questions about this report, or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact Mick Steward: 7641 3134;  
Email: [msteward@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk)**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1972  
BACKGROUND PAPERS - None**

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