

MINUTES

Meeting: GLA Oversight Committee
Date: Thursday 9 July 2015
Time: 2.00 pm
Place: Committee Room 4, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA

Copies of the minutes may be found at www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/oversight

Present:

Len Duvall AM (Chair)
Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman)
Jennette Arnold OBE AM
Andrew Boff AM
Darren Johnson AM
Joanne McCartney AM
Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Valerie Shawcross CBE AM

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

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Navin Shah AM, for whom Valerie Shawcross CBE AM attended as a substitute Member, and from Roger Evans 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.

- 2.2 In accordance with Standing Order 2.2D, the Chair took the next item in a different order than that set out on the agenda.

3 Transport for London Board Governance (Item 10)

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

3.2 In attendance for the first part of this item were:

- Isabel Dedring – Deputy Mayor for Transport;
- Howard Carter - General Counsel, Transport for London (TfL); and
- Graeme Craig - Director of Commercial Development, TfL.

3.3 In discussion, the Committee requested:

- That TfL considers asking its Board members to advocate specific areas of interest beyond their existing experience, background or skills;
- That in undertaking its review, TfL asks Deloitte to identify possible models for a Board-level strategic role in developing customer services; and
- That TfL gives consideration to establishing a governance mechanism to prevent Board members with conflicts of interests seeking to influence TfL decision-making informally outside the committee system.

3.4 A transcript of the discussion is attached as **Appendix 1**.

3.5 In order to accommodate the availability of a third guest for this item, and in accordance with Standing Order 2.2D, the Chair took the next five items of business at this point of the meeting.

4 Minutes (Item 3)

4.1 **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meetings of the Devolution Working Group held on 18 June 2015 and 22 June 2015 be signed by the Chair as correct records.

5 Summary List of Actions (Item 4)

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

5.2 **Resolved:**

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

6 People's Question Time (Item 6)

6.1 The Committee received the report of the Director of Communications and External Affairs.

6.2 The Greater London Authority's Assistant Director, External Relations explained that the next People's Question Time (PQT) event would be held on Thursday 26 November in the London Borough of Hillingdon, and that, in consultation with the chair of the event, Dr Onkar Sahota AM, the Beck Theatre in Hayes had been provisionally booked for the event.

6.3 In response to concerns about transport to the venue, it was explained that due to the nature of transport links in Hillingdon, which were primarily bus and roads-related, the local authority had been consulted in identifying the Beck Theatre as the best suitable venue. Although the venue was very well known locally, marketing information for the event would include travel information for attendees.

6.4 The Assistant Director, External Relations, also advised Members that future PQTs would benefit from the lessons that had been learnt from the last PQT event, such as rehearsals with the Chair, improved lighting and sound, and the use of paddleboards for identifying questions in the audience. The Chair also asked that security concerns arising from previous PQT events would also be considered.

6.5 Andrew Boff AM suggested that Chairs should be reminded of the need for political balance when calling on Assembly Members to answer questions, as he felt this had not always been in evidence at previous MQT events.

6.6 Jennette Arnold OBE AM, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated the Assistant Director, External Relations, and her team for the manner in which the recent commemorative events for the tenth anniversary of the 7 July London attacks had been organised and conducted.

6.7 **Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

7 Workforce Report (Item 7)

7.1 The Committee received the report of the Head of Paid Service.

7.2 **Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

8 Research to Support the Housing Committee's Investigation Into The Effect Of Rent Stabilisation Measures On London's Housing Market (Item 8)

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

8.2 Although the majority of the Committee expressed agreement for the proposals set out in the report, the GLA Conservative Assembly Members considered the proposed expenditure unnecessary given that they viewed, under the present Conservative Government, a national policy on rent controls unlikely.

8.3 Darren Johnson AM responded that the majority view of the Housing Committee had been that, even if there would not be a policy change during the current term of Government, four years would be a relatively brief period of time in which to develop a lobbying case and that having an evidence-based report to support that work would be beneficial. Jennette Arnold OBE AM suggested that the work would be a vehicle for raising awareness of the issue and encouraging best practise, and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM added that, as the scope of the report was broader than just rent controls, it would provide a helpful evidence base for the Assembly's work on the issue.

8.4 Andrew Boff AM requested details of the Housing Committee's preferred contractor for the proposed report, including background details of their previous work.

8.5 **Resolved:**

(a) That expenditure be agreed, up to a maximum of £10,000 from the 2015/16 scrutiny programme budget, to commission external contractors to carry out the technical advice and support outlined at paragraph 3.3 of the report, namely to conduct research into rent stabilisation models in London; and

(b) That it be noted that the Executive Director of the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Housing Committee, would commission the external contractors.

9 Transport for London Board Governance (Item 10)

9.1 The Committee resumed this item in order to put questions to the following guests:

- Howard Carter - General Counsel, TfL; and
- Graeme Craig - Director of Commercial Development, TfL.

9.2 In discussion, the Committee requested:

- That Assembly Members be allowed access to the Commercial Development Advisory Group, as appropriate; and
- Clarification on whether the proposed setting up of joint ventures in the form of limited liability partnerships would be less transparent and expose TfL to more speculative risks.

9.3 A transcript of the discussion is attached as **Appendix 2**.

9.4 **Resolved:**

That the report and discussion be noted.

10 Head of Paid Service Oral Update (Item 5)

10.1 The Committee received the oral update of the Head of Paid Service.

10.2 The Head of Paid Service commended the work of the Authority on the way in which the commemorative events for the tenth anniversary of the 7 July London attacks had been organised and conducted.

10.3 The Committee was updated on recent devolution activities and advised that an imminent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the devolution of planning powers was anticipated. The Committee was also informed that an update report on devolution matters would be received at the next meeting of the Congress of Leaders and the Head of Paid Service undertook to circulate it to the Committee once it had been made available.

11 Annual Governance Statement 2014-15 (Item 9)

11.1 The Committee received the report of the Head of Paid Service and Executive Director of Resources. In attendance for this item was the GLA's Head of Governance and Resilience.

11.2 **Resolved:**

That the draft GLA Annual Governance Statement for 2014-15 be noted.

12 Work Programme for the GLA Oversight Committee (Item 11)

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

12.2 **Resolved:**

That the work programme for the remainder of 2015-16 be noted.

13 Date of Next Meeting (Item 12)

13.1 The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Thursday 17 September 2015 at 2.00pm in the Chamber.

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

14.1 There were no items of urgent business.

15 Close of Meeting

15.1 The meeting finished at 4.02pm.

Chair

Date

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